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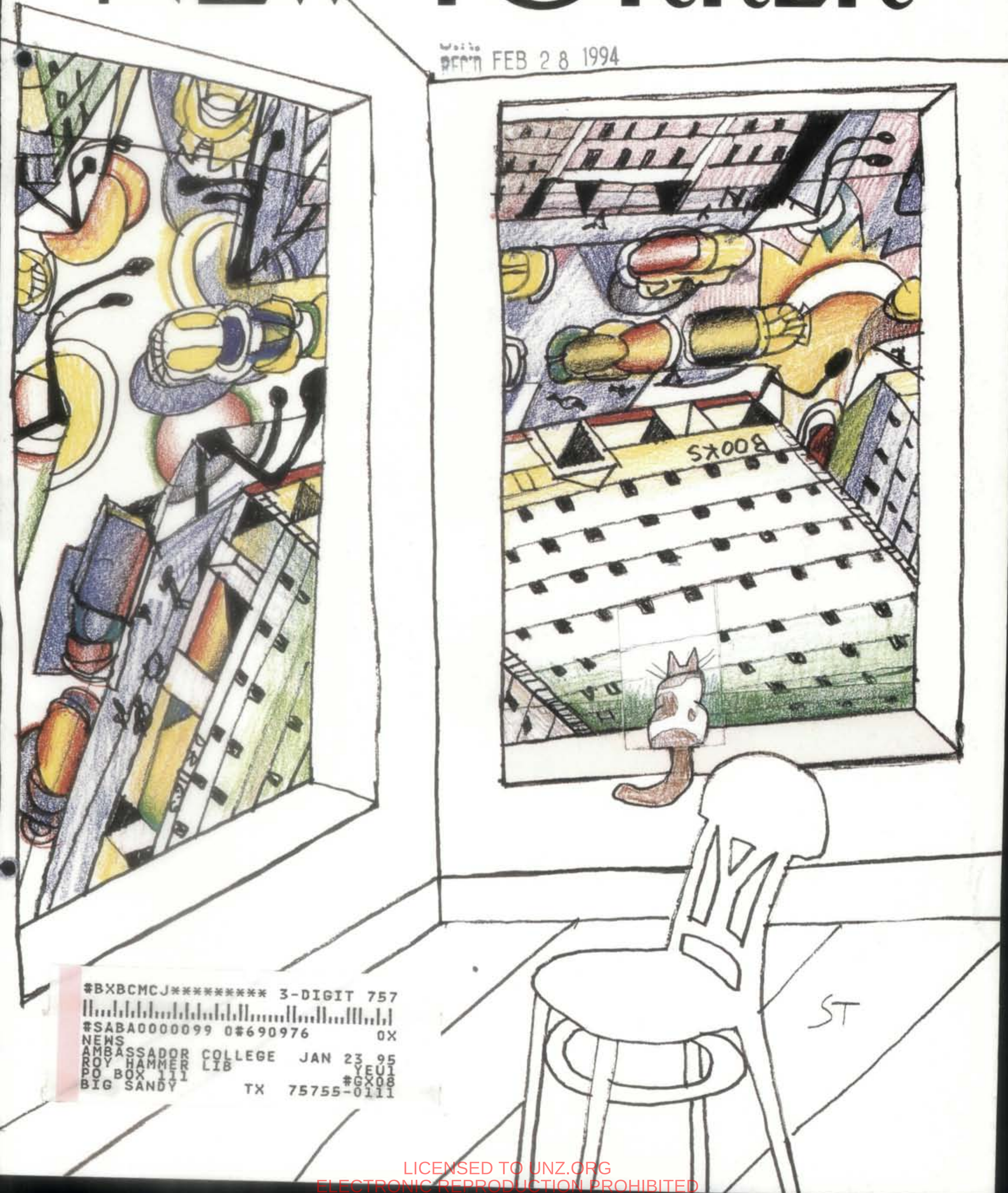

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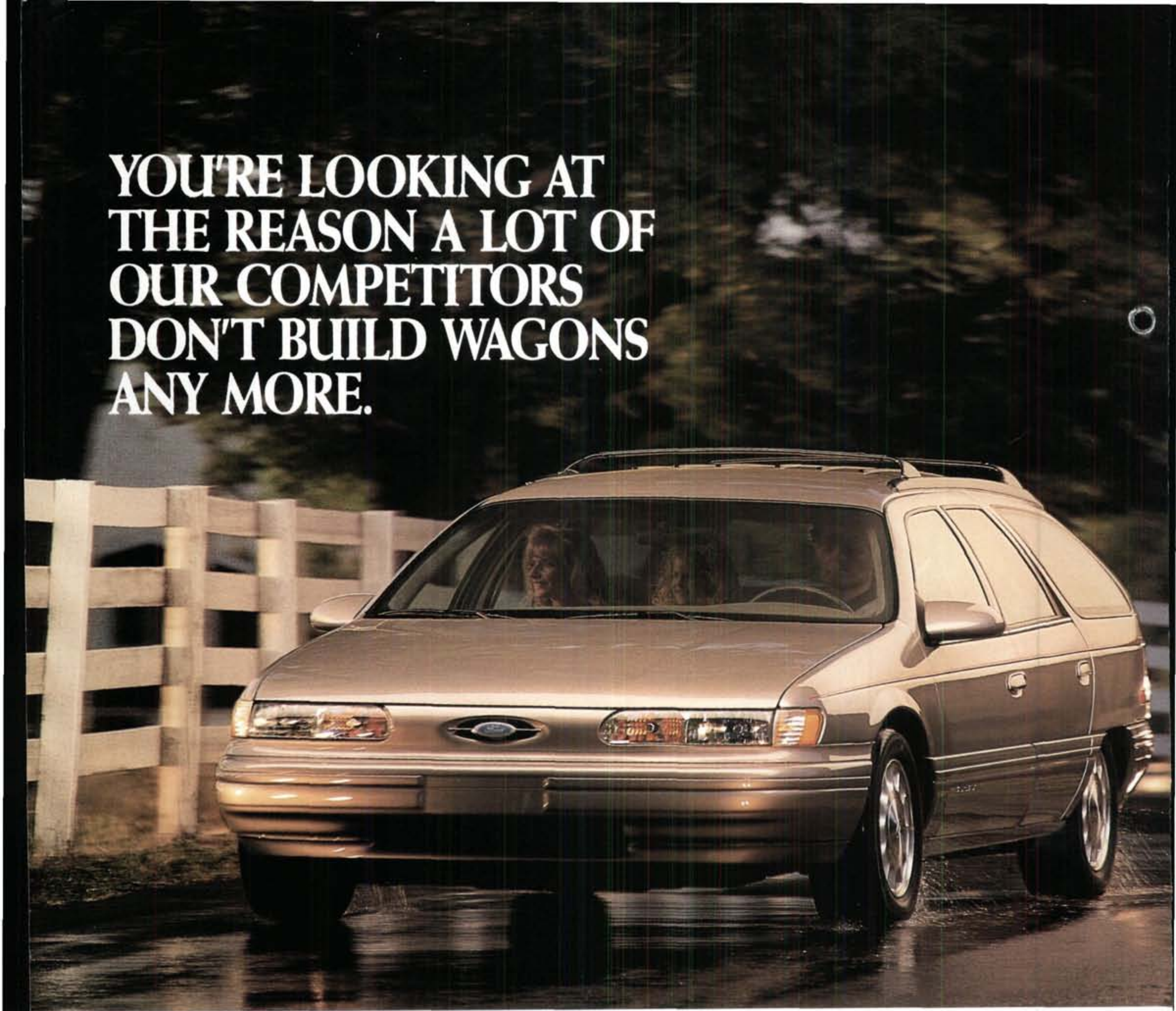
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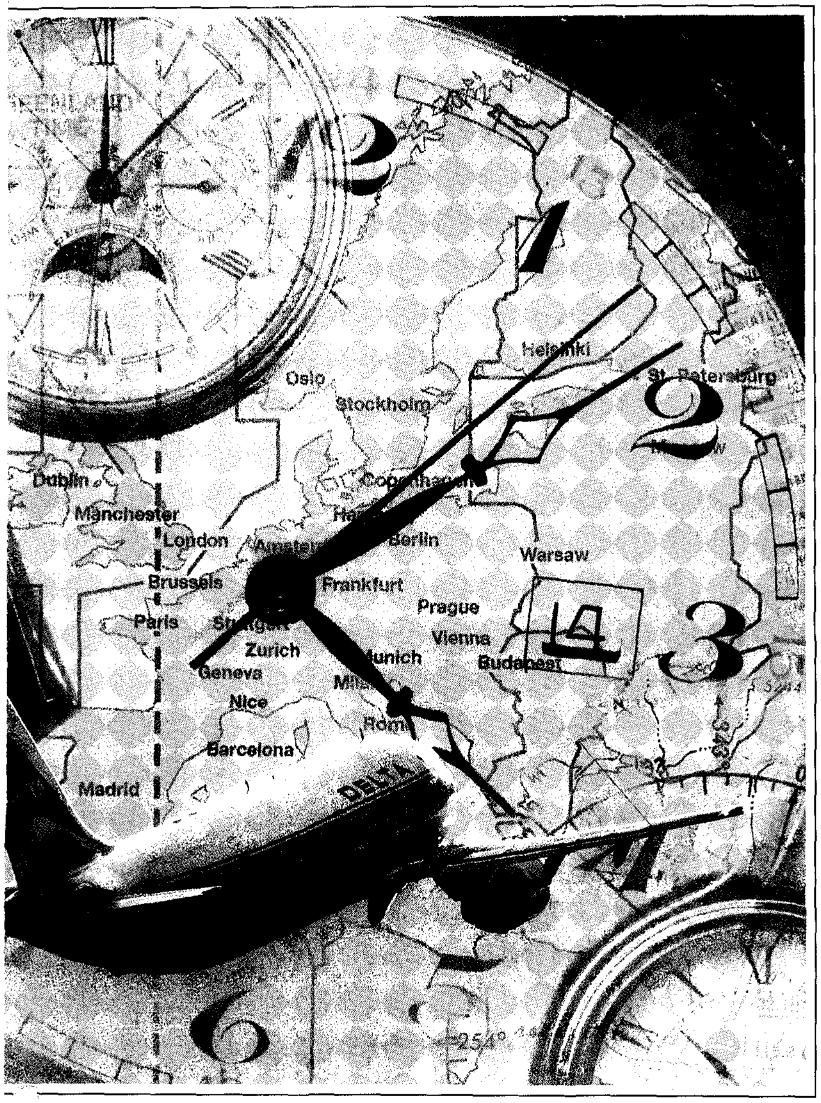
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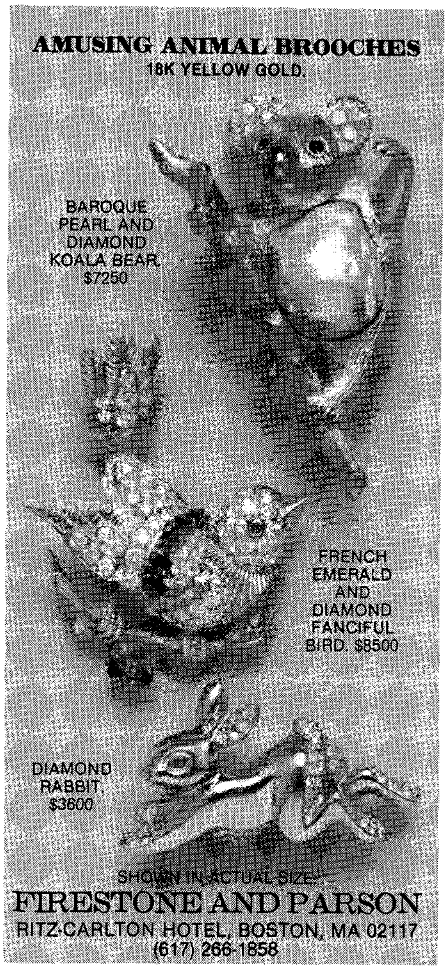

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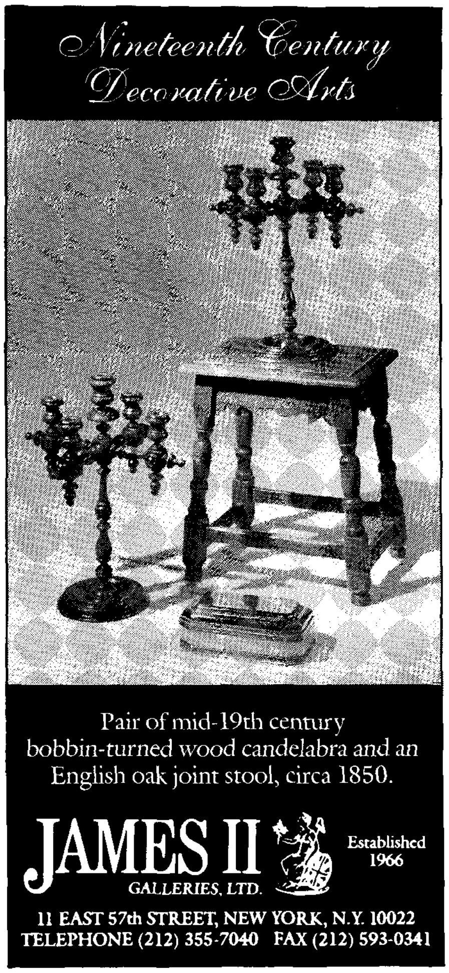

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FEBRUARY 28, 1994

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COMMENT

SIMON'S SIMPLE PIE

Senator Paul Simon, of Illinois, with his pert bow tie, still looks like what he once was: a crusading small-town newspaper editor who pecked out his stories on a manual typewriter. He is a decent liberal, who idolizes Lincoln and eulogizes Hubert Humphrey. But now this inveterate reformer has proposed a bill that, if it were to be enacted, would virtually outlaw social reform. Senator Simon hardly resembles a vandal with a spray can, but his amendment for a balanced budget would be an ugly swirl of graffiti on the Constitution.

The balanced-budget panacea was a rhetorical favorite of that great deficit spender Ronald Reagan. It was his genius to have it all ways: endorsing a balanced budget, though never presenting one to Congress, after gaining the benefits of an enormous federal stimulus to the economy by cutting taxes—especially for the wealthy. Reagan's effect (and, by some accounts, his intent) was to cripple the capacity of government for action (or, as he saw it, for mischief). As a political matter, his advocacy of a balanced-budget amendment was of a piece with his approval of an amendment that would have criminalized abortion. While supporters of these conservative causes felt that Reagan shared their passions, his senior aides and the Republican leaders in the Senate adroitly managed to keep the amendments lost in the legislative labyrinth; the constituencies remained roiled, but nothing happened.

Paul Simon's balanced-budget amendment reverses the classic wisecrack of Karl Marx that history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. At the moment when President Clinton has brought the Reagan deficits down to manageable levels—slicing the deficit almost in half as a percentage of the gross domestic product by 1996, according to the Congressional Budget Office—a liberal Democrat has proposed a mechanism that would sanctify Reagan's social deficits and frustrate Clinton's plans for public investment.

The heart of the amendment, which will be debated this week on the Senate floor, seems perfectly straightforward: "Total outlays for any fiscal year shall

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not exceed total receipts for that fiscal year, unless three-fifths of the whole number of each House of Congress shall provide by law for a specific excess of outlays over receipts by a rollcall vote." This simple formula, however, is simple in more ways than one. It is denseness masquerading as homespun honesty.

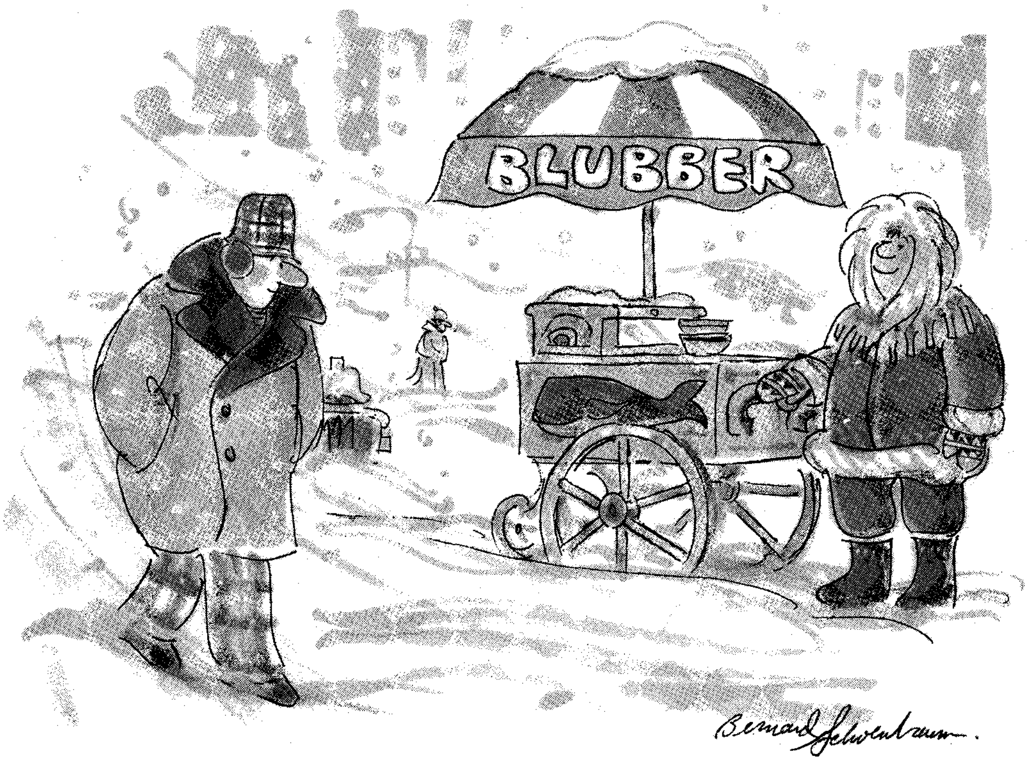
The amendment is not merely a green-eyeshade calculation, making the federal ledger books balance. It is an attempt to enshrine an economic dogma, crippling pragmatic response to changing conditions. The fiscal flexibility that has enabled the country to sustain prosperity through much of the post-Second World War era would be hobbled. Policies structured into the economy, such as unemployment insurance and stimulative fiscal policy, have kept economic downturns from spiralling off the edge of a cliff. Keynesianism, in effect, enabled conservatives to profit politically from their denigrations of government while the social contract was held together by the liberal legacy. Reaganism was a mutant variety of Keynesianism pretending to be its contrary.

The balanced-budget amendment has more to do with cultural atavism than with economic policy. It presumes that the national economy can be organized like a household economy, and this fallacy is even more perverse than it seems, since the household it analogizes is not the modern one. Ours is the age of the mortgage, not the mattress: businesses, families, and individuals borrow to invest in goods or services. To be creditworthy is to be a good citizen, a candidate for further loans. The amendment would institutionalize a vision of an orderly, bucolic past without restoring it.

Forcing a balanced budget would deprive families and businesses of federal resources that now support them, for on the national balance sheet the Treasury's outflow is income to the private economy. Therefore, recessions would inevitably be deep and long. Even natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, would foster fiscal crises. Senator Simon's logic suggests that the catastrophes the amendment would foster would lead to the political result he wishes. He seems, indeed, to encourage precisely such crises. Faced with ruinous cuts in public investments, education, infrastructure, defense, and entitlements, Congress, having no alternative, would presumably raise taxes to keep pace with the social spending he favors. But under Simon's plan more votes would be required in the House and the Senate to raise taxes than to slash programs. The likely political dynamic would be a bacchanalia of cutting, further disabling the government's capacity to cope with economic cycles and widening the social deficit. In the ensuing struggle of each against all, tax-subsidized businesses and industries would be more protected politically than programs for the middle class and the poor. Increased inequality would be the outcome. And the annual deficit-reduction frenzy would continue to fall heaviest on those not in the upper income brackets.

But why should this happen, when forty-six states have some version of a balanced-budget requirement? Why can't the federal government have the discipline of a state? To conflate the national government with the states is to misunderstand the federal system. Many of the states have to balance only operating budgets, not total budgets. Unlike the federal government, they have capital budgets to account for public investments, which are financed by floating bonds and by other borrowing techniques. All the states draw on the federal purse, without which none of them would have balanced budgets. The states are not accomplishing their feat alone, as though they were separate countries. The amendment, then, would place extreme stress on the federal system.

But perhaps the most pernicious consequence of the balanced-budget nostrum would be to imperil what James Madison, in *The Federalist* No. 58, described as "the fundamental principle of free government": majority rule. The federal system was carefully devised to protect the rights and the representation of minorities, but it was not created for "the power" to be "transferred to the minority," in the words of Madison. The balanced-budget amendment erases the fundamental principle, replacing it on all matters of money with rule by the minority. In this case, a particular minority's interest would be served. The amendment favors those who wish to obstruct, to stymie national action, or, as Madison warned, "to screen themselves from equitable sacrifices to the general weal, or, in particular emergencies, to extort unreasonable indulgences." The entire effect would be to throw into doubt the legitimacy of the idea of majority rule, which, Madison argued, would lead to "public convulsions and the ruin of popular governments." By unbalancing the Constitution, the balanced-budget panacea would unbalance the country. ◆



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IN THE MAIL

TRAUMA THERAPY

Alec Wilkinson's article "A Changed Vision of God" (January 24th) meaningfully described the trauma suffered by the blind survivors of the Cambodian holocaust and the tragic psychological and physical consequences of that trauma. Understanding a symptom with no apparent physical origin is always complex; but even though, as Mr. Wilkinson says, no cure for these survivors' blindness has been found, it is still conceivable that their symptoms could have been alleviated by psychoanalysis.

The field of psychoanalytic therapies has expanded to include many ideas beyond the significance of suppressed memories. The Cambodian women's symptoms seem to include elements of psychosomatic disorders caused by trauma and of post-traumatic stress disorder. Although the women's frequent moves could have complicated things, an attempt should have been made to offer them therapy, now that techniques have been developed to help the severely traumatized. Even though the deck is stacked against holocaust survivors, some reduction in the level of psychic suffering might have been found.

BARBARA H. GOLD, C.S.W.
New York City

SECOND OPINIONS

In reference to the letter from Lawrence Litt ("In the Mail," January 24th), if it is accepted that the Supreme Court is the ultimate authority on the Constitution no question exists regarding a right to keep and bear arms. There is no such right. In 1939, for a case centering on the Second Amendment, Justice James C. McReynolds wrote in a unanimous opinion that the Amendment does not guarantee a right to keep and bear a firearm that does not have "some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia." And in 1972 Justice William O. Douglas wrote, "A powerful lobby dins into the ears of our citizenry that these gun purchases are constitutional rights protected by the Second Amendment," but, he went on, the Second Amendment was simply "designed to keep alive the militia."

JOHN ECKELS
New Bern, N.C.

Lawrence Litt asked whether the American people are entitled to a reëxamination of the Second Amendment, but upon reading in the same issue about the interactions between the Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian people ("A Changed Vision of God") one sees why our Founding Fathers, being knowledgeable and aware of similar historical occurrences, had the foresight and vigilance to include the Second Amendment in the first place.

CHARLES JONES
Taylorsville, N.C.

LAW AND ORDER

In the January 24th Comment, "A Minimum of Sense," you imply that Christine Todd Whitman, New Jersey's new governor, was elected on the strength of her "law-and-order" stand. What's ironic about this is that Whitman climbed aboard the law-and-order bandwagon by default.

Early in the campaign, Whitman, not the Democratic incumbent Jim Florio, was attacked for being "soft

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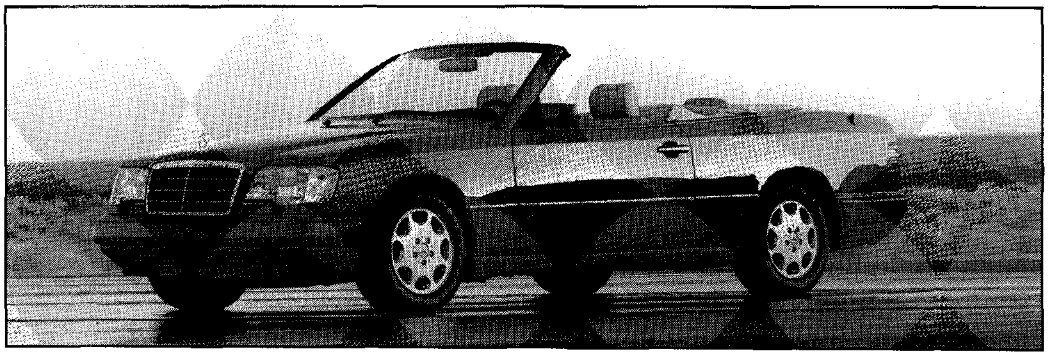

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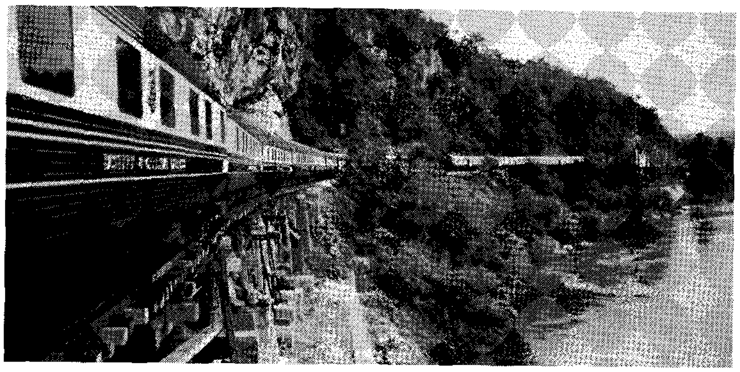

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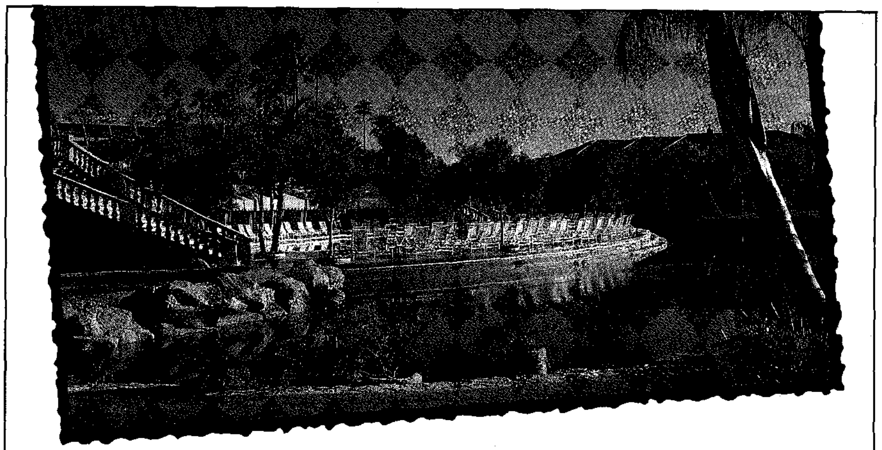

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on crime," because she had publicly questioned the wisdom of mandatory minimum prison sentences for nonviolent offenders. Echoing others who had carefully examined the cost and lack of effect of mandatory minimums, particularly as they were applied to certain first-time offenders, Whitman actually seemed prepared to break ranks with the political status quo by injecting some common sense into the debate over crime. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Hammered by Florio on this front (and, no doubt, lobbied intensively in private by aghast fellow-Republicans), the G.O.P. nominee quickly retreated, and her advisers ginned up their own get-tough rhetoric. Thus Whitman changed her tune and started touting life in prison for third-time violent offenders.

LEE SEGLEM
Managing Editor, *New Jersey Reporter*
Princeton, N.J.

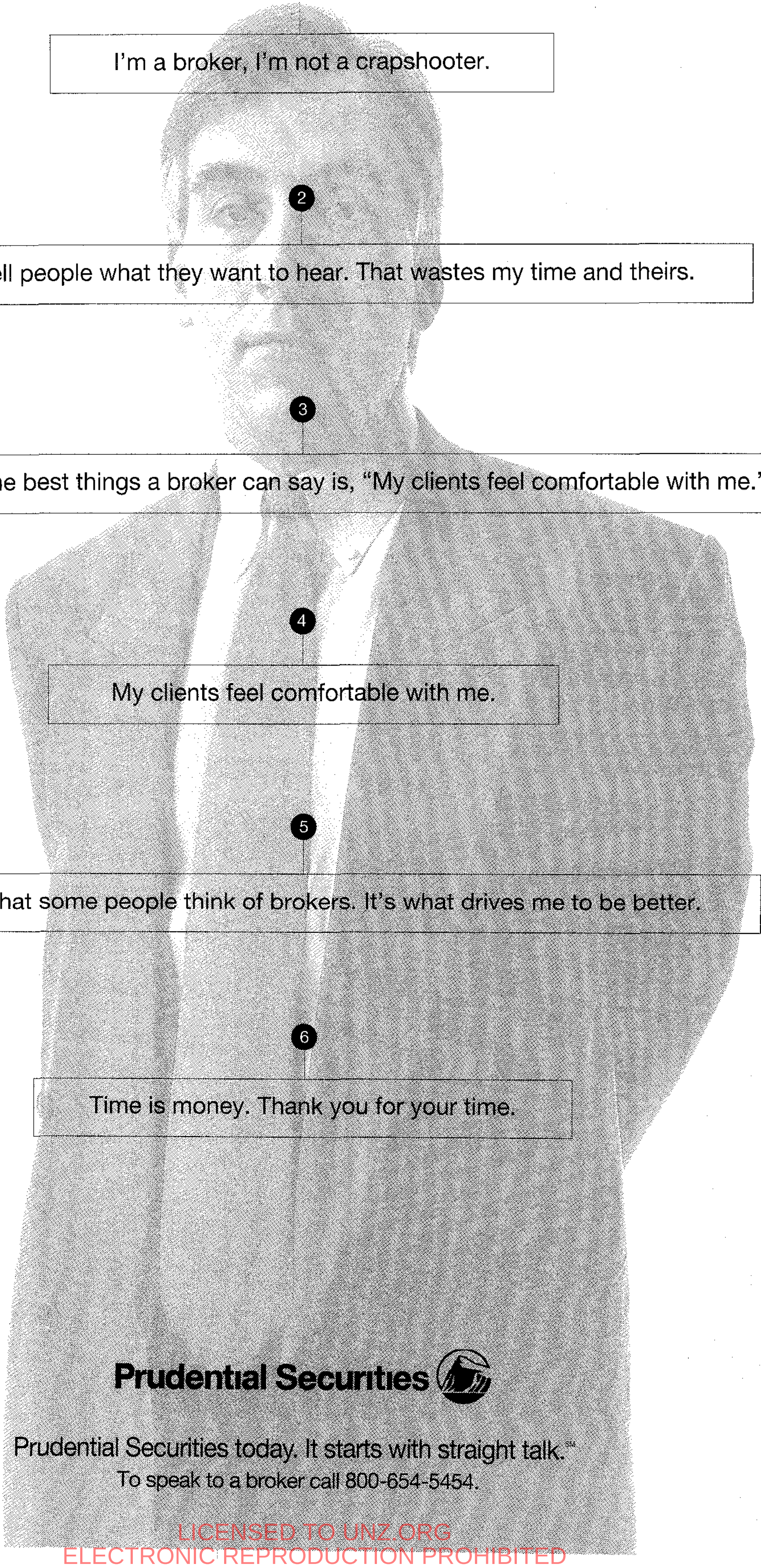
DUCKING DISNEY

I have been a fan of hockey for most of my sixteen years, and I have played the game since I discovered a local girls' team three years ago. I have always admired the sport for its lack of commercialism and sensationalism compared with other professional sports, and so I shuddered at Charles McGrath's description of the Mighty Ducks' transformation into the Ice Capades ("Rocking the Pond," January 24th). As one of the few girls in the sport, I realize that increasing the popularity of hockey carries a number of advantages, one being that broadening hockey's appeal and displaying its skill and grace (rather than its clashes of brute strength) create more opportunities for women to get into the game. But I feel strongly that hockey can be made more popular without being diluted by Disney's elaborate techniques. Hockey should not become just another professional sport where the logo means more than the game.

KAREN ROSENBERG
Scarsdale, N.Y.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

(**Rick Gongorek is a Prudential Securities Broker**)



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

Do the Stomp

EVER since the New Age performance art of Blue Man Group became an Off Broadway hit, producers all over downtown have been trying to turn drumming into dollars. The latest entry in this sweepstakes, currently running at the Orpheum, is a show by an English octet called Stomp. The group came into being when Luke Cresswell and Steve McNicholas decided to create a performance devoid of words or dramatic situation—an evening devoted solely to percussion. There are no drum kits here, however. Rhythms spring from the interplay of everyday objects: the collision of hubcaps, the crash of crates, the clomp of boots. Stomp's effects can be quietly elegant (the whooshing of a broom) or impressively grotesque (platform shoes made of oil drums make even the most extreme seventies footwear seem restrained) or just plain loud.

Since its première engagement, at the Edinburgh Festival in 1991, Stomp has played all over the world, and their work has acquired diverse influences: Kodo drumming, South African gum-boot dancing. Why so long to hit New York? It may be that in a city infused with street performers, from tap dancers to hip-hop poets, Stomp seemed superfluous. But high-voltage virtuosity should insure them a niche (and a guest spot on Letterman). The group has brains, but the over-all effect is brawny, warriorlike. Think Sharks and Jets with props, or post-punk cheerleaders on speed, and you'll start to get the idea.

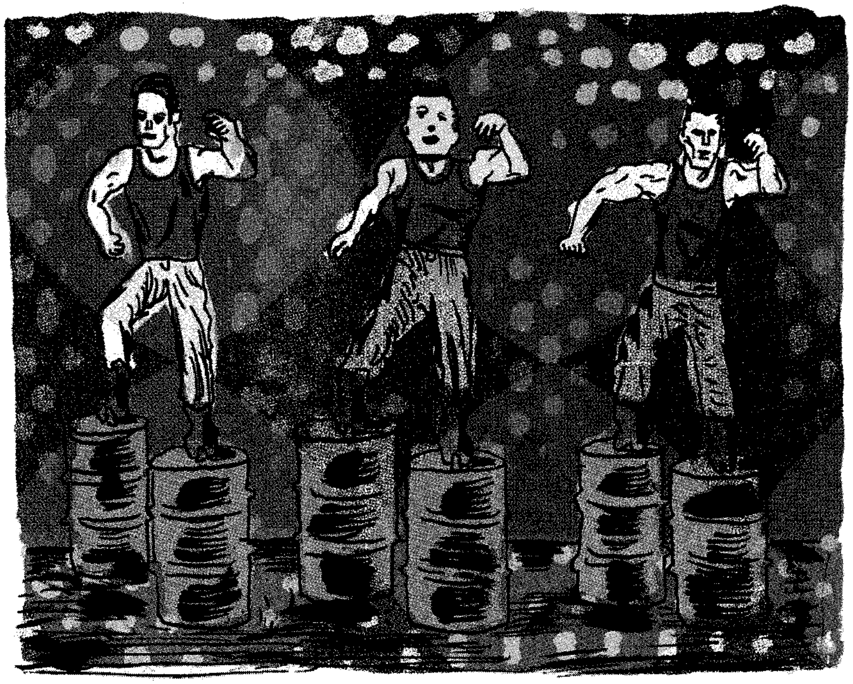
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			23	24	25	26
27	28	1				

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

The America Play—A play by Suzan-Lori Parks, with Gail Grate, Reggie Montgomery, and Michael Potts. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Carousel—Michael Hayden is Billy Bigelow in this production of Rodgers and Hammerstein's 1945 musical, which comes to New York via London's Royal National Theatre. Nicholas Hytner directed. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)



Stomp at the Orpheum Theatre.

GARY PANTER

Damn Yankees—Victor Garber and Bebe Neuwirth star in the first Broadway revival of the 1955 musical by George Abbott and Douglass Wallop (book) and Richard Adler and Jerry Ross (score and lyrics). In previews. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Family Business—Dancer David Gordon and his son Ain in a play they wrote and directed, which also stars Valda Setterfield (David's wife and Ain's mother). Previews Feb. 23-24. Opens Feb. 25 at 8 and runs through March 6. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077.)

The Mayor of Boys Town—A one-man play about the Nebraska institution, written and performed by Barnaby Spring. Previews through Feb. 26. Opens Feb. 27 at 3. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. Previews through Feb. 26. Opens Feb. 27 at 7. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling one-act comedies by David Ives. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Angels in America—"Perestroika," the second half of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," is a masterpiece. Epic in scope, superbly acted, and directed with passionate restraint by George C. Wolfe, the play employs an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age. It runs in repertory with the first half, "Millennium Approaches." ("Perestroika" was reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93; "Millennium Approaches," 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Au Pair Man—Anglo-Irish relations go downhill in Hugh Leonard's highly predictable two-character study in class and obsession. Charlotte Moore and Ciarán O'Reilly do all they can, and there's an occasional wonderful joke, but the play isn't up to their efforts. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 279-4200. Closes March 6.)

Avenue X—An a-cappella musical set in Brooklyn in 1963, by John Jiler and Ray Leslee. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

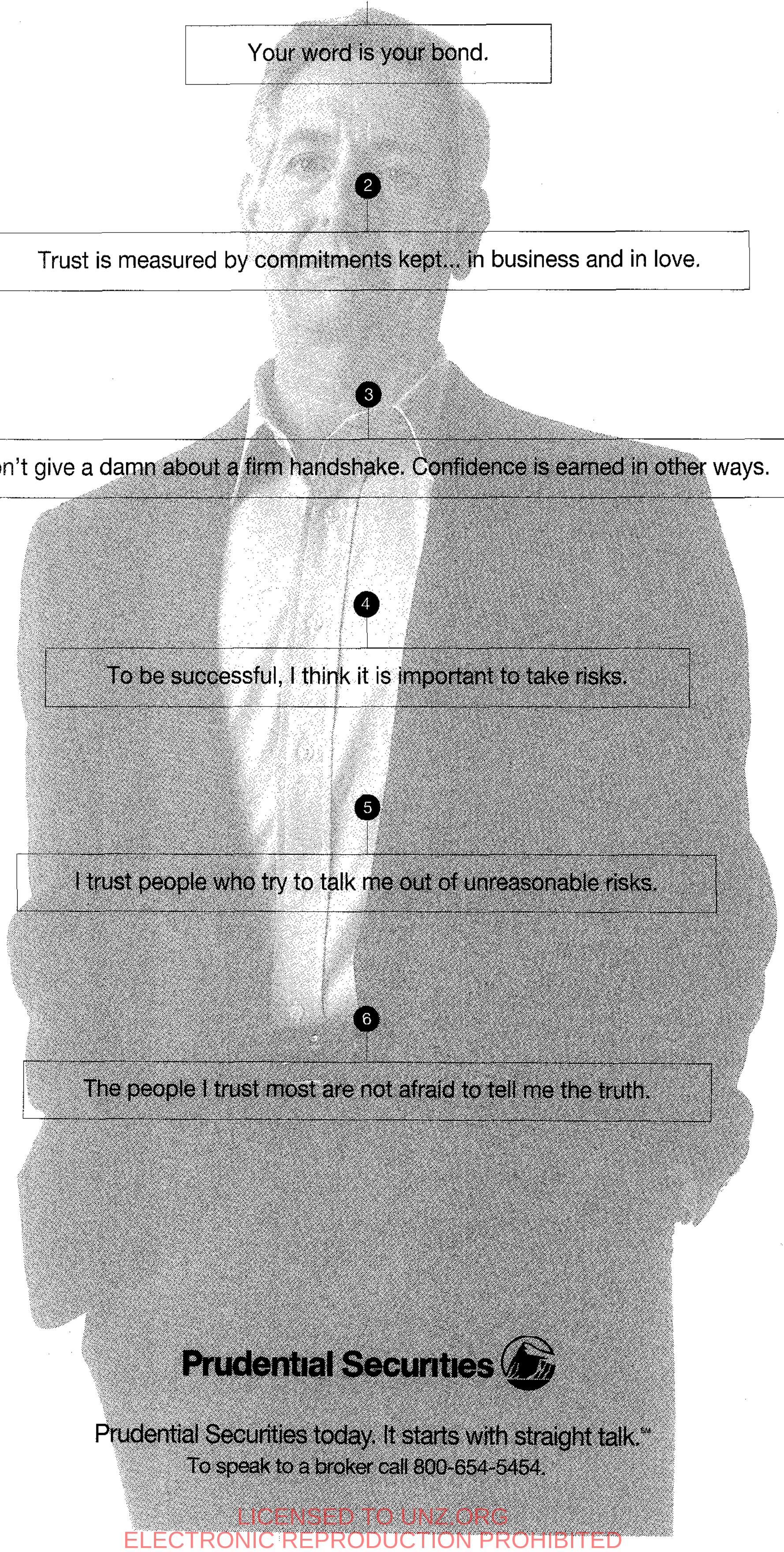
Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

A Body of Water—A play by Jenna Zark, which alternates with Regina Taylor's "Escape from Paradise." (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 12.)

Cyrano: The Musical—The nose have it. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Death and the Maiden—The Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre performs Ariel Dorfman's play, in English (three times a week) and Spanish (four times a week). (304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes Feb. 27.)

Escape from Paradise—A one-woman play written and performed by Regina Taylor. Performances alternate with "A Body of Water," by Jenna Zark. (Circle Repertory Company Theatre, 99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes March 13.)

(**Gad Janay invests with Prudential Securities**)

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Hello Again—Suggested by Arthur Schnitzler's play "La Ronde," Michael John LaChiusa's new musical travels through various American decades to tell a bittersweet story of hetero- and homosexual seductions and betrayals. LaChiusa is lucky to have director and choreographer Graciela Daniele: her streamlined and sexy stage pictures make the music seem better than it is. Of the excellent cast of ten, Judy Blazer and John Cameron Mitchell are especially effective. (2/21/94) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Innocent Eréndira—An English-language adaptation of Gabriel García Márquez's novella, starring Miriam Colón. A joint production of Repertorio Español and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre. (Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. 889-2850.)

Irene Worth's Portrait of Edith Wharton—Miss Worth, looking sleek and elegant in a Fortuny gown, gives a reading of passages drawn from Wharton's memoir, "A Backward Glance," and from her other writings, and explores the eventful inner and outer life of this season's literary It Girl. Miss Worth's intonations have an air of self-satisfaction that doesn't seem true to Wharton, but the evening has its moments. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Feb. 27.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his first musical is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. The subject allows Simon to do what he does best: tell jokes about the making of laughs. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Little Eyolf—Ibsen's themes seem a bit shopworn in this late play, but there are some deeply moving scenes in which an estranged husband and wife deal with the death of their child. The cast is very fine, particularly Robin Leslie Brown as the aunt and Mark Kenneth Smaltz as the father. Joanne Camp is the mother. Solidly directed by Shepard Sobel. (Pearl, 125 W. 22nd St. 645-7708.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Richard Chamberlain is all charm and suave good looks as Professor Henry Higgins, and Melissa Errico lends a fine voice and an attractive presence to the role of Eliza. With excellent support from Paxton Whitehead, Dolores Sutton, and Julian Holloway. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

My Head Was a Sledgehammer—Richard Foreman's new play, performed by his Ontological-Hysteric Theatre. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. For reservations, call 533-4650.)

No Man's Land—Christopher Plummer and Jason Robards star in Harold Pinter's 1975 play. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes March 13.)

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—The latest solo show by the Boss of monologuists, Eric Bogosian, is basically a continuation of his 1990 "Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll": portraits of a dozen alarming characters—the manic, the depressive, the deluded, and the deranged—who have squatters' rights in Bogosian's mind. (2/21/94) (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—With a Mephistophelean smoothness, the master sleight-of-hand artist discourses on the history of trickery and performs illusions that will amaze even those who wouldn't normally go out of their way to see card tricks. Under the direction of David Mamet, who is right at home in the slightly sinister man's world of magic, Mr. Jay makes willing and delighted fools of his audience. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Sand—Three one-acts by Edward Albee make up this evening, the third installment of Signature Theatre Company's Albee season. The first two plays, "Box" and "The Sandbox," are short, intriguing meditations on great themes: life and death, art, and the decay of civilization. The third is the New York première of "Finding the Sun" (1983): an extended family spends a day on the beach and delivers a lot of great lines that don't add up to a play. Directed by Mr. Albee. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes March 6.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

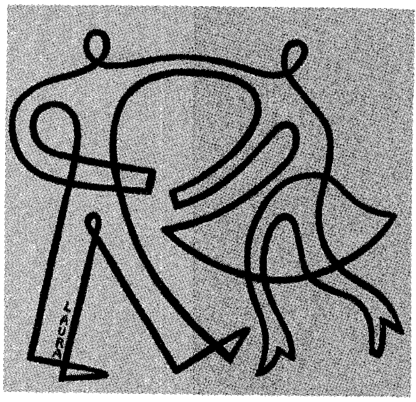
Three Birds Alighting on a Field—Timberlake Wertenbaker's satire of the London art world of the eighties, an import from London's Royal Court, has a rather heavy hand when it comes to parcelling out blame for the degradation of English values, but Max Stafford-Clark's direction has elicited good performances from Harriet Walter, Zach Grenier, and Daniel Gerroll. (2/21/94) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Three Tall Women—This 1991 play, in which a wealthy old woman tells her life story, sometimes aided (or hindered) by younger versions of herself, is Edward Albee at his best. He reëxamines the clichés of marriage in rich, humorous language. Myra Carter gives a tremendous performance as the dowager; Jordan Baker and Marian Seldes are worthy supporters. Directed by Lawrence Sacharow. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes March 13.)

Unfinished Stories—A play by Sybille Pearson, with Christopher Collet, E. Katherine Kerr, Laurence Luckinbill, and Joseph Wiseman. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.



LAURA LJUNGKVIST

DANCE

White Oak Dance Project—The opening performance of a weeklong engagement by Mikhail Baryshnikov's and Mark Morris's company, in its New York début. Founded in 1990 and based at the White Oak Plantation, in northern Florida, White Oak brings together eight dancers from American companies. The opening program includes the New York première of Twyla Tharp's "Pergolesi," danced by Baryshnikov; "Signals," a revival of Merce Cunningham's 1970 classic, with music by David Tudor, Gordon Mumma, and John Cage (and new costumes by Brice Marden); and Morris's "Mosaic and United," which premièred last year, set to the music of Henry Cowell's String Quartets No. 3 and No. 4. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. March 1 at 7:30. Through March 6.)

New York City Ballet—Final performances of the season. Feb. 23 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze,'" and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: "The Chairman Dances," "Tchaikovsky Pas de Deux," "In the Night," and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 8: "Mozartiana," "Orpheus," and "Union Jack." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 2: "Kammermusik No. 2," "Sonatine," "A Schubert Sonata," and "Fancy Free." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: "The Chairman Dances," "Ash," "Bugaku," and "Symphonic Dances." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 1: Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," "Robert Schumann's 'Davidsbündlertänze,'" and "Cortège Hongrois." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 7: A benefit for the Dancers' Emergency Fund, including a new work by Peter Martins and excerpts from "Vienna Waltzes," "Union Jack," "Andantino," and other ballets. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Feld Ballets/NY—Feb. 23 at 8: "Contra Pose," "La Vida," "Ion," and "MRI" (première). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8: "Play Bach," "Asia," "Clave," and "MRI." . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Kore," "Evoe," and "Doo Dah Day." . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: "La Vida," "Ion," "Savage Glance," and "Common Ground." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 2: "Aurora I," "La Vida," "Echo," and "Skara Brae." . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 7:30: "Aurora I," "Doo Dah Day," and "MRI." . . . ¶ March 1 at 8: "Contra Pose," "Asia," "Clave," and "MRI." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through March 20.)

Schandelmeier & Company—An evening dedicated to the memory of Pola Nirenska, a Polish-born dancer and choreographer (1910-92). (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Feb. 24-27 at 8:30.)

Maxine Moerman—Presenting "The Elements Project," a performance in four sections, with film. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. Feb. 24-25 at 8. Tickets at the door on the nights of the event.)

Ballet Builders—A program of works by emerging and established ballet choreographers. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Feb. 24-26 at 8 and Feb. 27 at 2. For reservations, call 924-0077.)

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NIGHT LIFE

Killer Bee

"As someone who's contributed more than his fair share of angst to the pop charts, I thought it would be nice to lighten up a bit." That's how the rock star Sting, perhaps pop music's best-selling purveyor of existential melancholy, explains the perversely upbeat agenda of "Ten Summoner's Tales," which was released last spring and has sold almost three million copies. Ever since his days fronting the Police, the singer has been a dark and vexing lyricist, addressing both personal demons (an ex-lover's every breath, the loss of his father) and global ones (political oppression in Chile, the troubles in Northern Ireland) in that unmistakable tenor wail. In the course of grappling with such serious and high-minded matters, Sting has experimented with moody jazz and exotic world-music colorings, thus offending the sort of rock purists who equate complicated horn charts with pretentiousness. "You can be critically acclaimed or critically panned," Sting philosophizes, "and you need a certain measure of irony to deal with both."

It turns out that a lot of Sting's detractors were seduced by the sweet melodies and self-deprecating lyrics on "Ten Summoner's Tales." The album received seven Grammy nominations, and the Englishman will be in New York when the awards are broadcast from Radio City on March 1—just a few days after his February 26 performance at the Meadowlands Arena. (He'll also appear at the Paramount next week, on March 2, 3, 5, and 6.) After the tour wraps this spring, Sting plans to give in to his dark side again by acting in a film adaptation of Patrick McGrath's "The Grotesque," in which he will play a malevolent butler. "It's a black comedy which requires some bleak and wintry English weather," says Sting, "so we'll probably do it around July or August."

CONCERTS

Daltrey Sings Townshend—The Who's once and future mouthpiece pays homage to the band's guitarist, songwriter, and mastermind. Roger Daltrey will perform Pete Townshend's songs, both alone and in duets with a few well-connected fans, including Eddie Vedder, the Spin Doctors, the Chieftains, and 4 Non Blondes' Linda Perry. Townshend himself will also be on hand, as will Who bassist John Entwistle. Don't rule out the appearance of another major, major name or two. The house band for this event includes sixty members of the Juilliard Orchestra, none of whom are expected to destroy their instruments during the encore. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 23-24 at 8.)

Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra—Flitting freely over the jazz repertory of the last seventy years, the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra remains a tightly knit ensemble whose enthusiasm always overrides any traces of academicism. Among the eager-beaver soloists are tenorist Joshua Redman, trumpeter Nicholas Payton, and altoist Jesse Davis. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 24 at 8.)

Bill Frisell—Frisell's trio will play the guitarist's new score for Buster Keaton's 1924 classic "Sherlock Jr.," which will be screened, along with two shorts. Frisell's emotionally contained music should be a perfect match for the Great Stone Face; its characteristic fits and starts and rhythmic flip-flops mirror the spatial dislocations and hyperintensity of a Keaton film. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 856-2424. Feb. 25-26 at 8.)

Inti-Illimani—Using sixteen different string, wind, and percussion instruments, these seven Chilean musicians, practitioners of *nueva canción*, play with the verve of the Gipsy Kings and the smoothness of romantic balladeers. They lived abroad for fifteen years after Allende's assassination; their exile and the folk influence of the late sixties resulted in a hybrid of styles. Their latest release, "Andadas," includes folkie New Age tunes, traditional-sounding ballads, solos with percussion, instrumentals with panpipes, and choral numbers with a layering of classical-sounding voices. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 26 at 8.)

Emergency Broadcast Network at Limelight.

RUSSELL CHRISTIAN

Nancy LaMott—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Feb. 23 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.

UB40—This delightful, smooth-loping British reggae band always turns a concert into one big party. With US 3, in a show postponed from Feb. 14. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Diedre Murray Quartet—Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. Feb. 23 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.

Music of Lebanon—Mansour Ajami and Ali Jihad Racy. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Feb. 25 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Oleta Adams—Town Hall. Feb. 25 at 8 and Feb. 27 at 8:30.

Music and Dance of West Africa—Foday Musa Suso and Odadaa! (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Feb. 26 at 8 and Feb. 27 at 7.)

Sting—Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Feb. 26 at 8.

"Lyrics & Lyricists"—The series salutes Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 27 at 2:30 and 8 and Feb. 28 at 2 and 8.)

Celine Dion—Town Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.

JAZZ AND BLUES

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. There's a long, elegant bar with seats to accommodate the few non-dancers. It can be a tight squeeze, but it's a svelte crowd. **GROOVE COLLECTIVE** is in on Friday nights.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—This northern restaurant-bar, an airy two-tiered space with pastel walls and potted greenery, is a shade too slick for Columbia students but just right for post-collegiate jazz fans. The name is taken from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome that featured Bird himself. **DENIE CORBIT** appears with a trio on Feb. 24, followed by the **NADINE SIMMS** trio on Feb. 27. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Jazz, mirrors, and a gift shop. Through Feb. 27: the **GEORGE SHEARING** duo and the **KENNY BURRELL** trio. Between them, pianist Shearing and guitarist Burrell may convince you that affability isn't a dirty word in jazz. Working with his excellent bassist, Neil Swainson, Shearing spins out perfectly balanced choruses of gleaming melody with equal parts swing, bop, and decorum. Burrell's blues quotient may be considerably higher, but his funk is cut with virtuosic élan. Singer **DIANE SCHUUR** begins on March 1. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here, shoehorned into a corner behind the club's famous Baldwin. **KENNY DREW, JR., LYNN SEATON,** and **WINARD HARPER** continue through Feb. 26. Dining.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—An authentic old locker deep in the heart of the meat district, complete with vintage scale and hooks, has been converted into a comfortable, banquette-lined paradise. Thursday nights belong to **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop. Guitar great **DAVE TRONZO** is in on Feb. 25.

Down Beat, 1010 Seventh Ave. S. (620-4000)—A long, warm, wood-panelled room with a nicely appointed bar and a reliable roster of jazz names. Murals of Diz, Bird, and Basie adorn the walls, so the players are always in good company. Singer **NNENNA FREELON** continues through Feb. 27.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—The seating arrangement in this long, narrow, red-velvet-and-mirror-walled basement makes flying coach seem roomy; nevertheless, it's one of the city's top jazz spots—thanks largely to the club's talent bookers. But watch your head. The **PHIL WOODS** quintet continues through Feb. 27. Forty years down the line, Woods still breathes bop. The alto saxophonist, who speaks fluent Parker while indulging his own relaxed and ripely romantic take on the music, is playing better than ever. Pop fans may want to catch this engagement—Woods is responsible for the sax breaks on Billy

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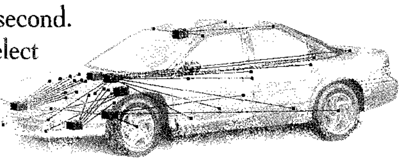

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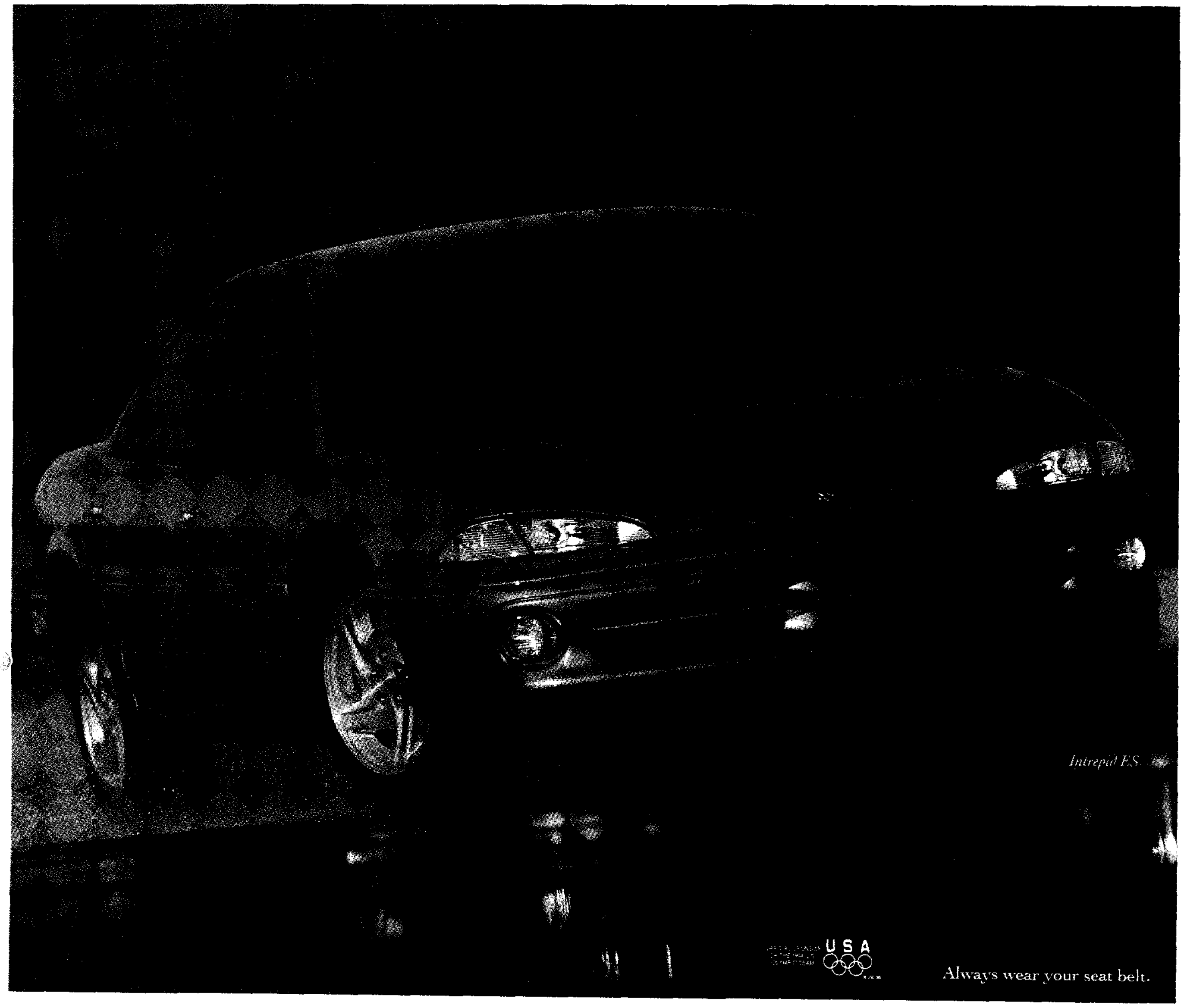


Intrepid ES

Always wear your seat belt.

Joel's "Just the Way You Are" and Paul Simon's "Still Crazy After All These Years"—to see what he can do in front of a smart modern band. Starting March 1: the **NEW YORK SWING QUARTET**. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

FEZ, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar and lounge, hidden beneath the Time Café, with satin couches and mosaic tables. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a sleek and comfortable spot to take in a show. New York-based singer-songwriters **JANE WILLIAMS** and **DOROTHY SCOTT** appear on Feb. 25. After this gig, Scott will be off to Sweden for a while, so don't miss this opportunity to enjoy her lovely, quirky folk-blues sensibility. On Feb. 28: **GUITARS PLAY MINGUS.** The brainchild of a music professor at Concordia University, in Montreal, the program made its début at Lincoln Center this past August, then swung over to Fez in October. The lineup includes members of the **MINGUS BIG BAND'S** rhythm section, plus guitarists Peter Leitch, Vic Juris, Ron Jackson, Ed Cherry (a Gillespie associate), and a mystery guest. Every Thursday, you can catch the Mingus Big Band itself. Dining.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—This club, run by a couple of forward-looking Wisconsinites, specializes in all manner of neo-this and post-that ensembles. The atmosphere is low-key, low-budget bohemian. **JOHN ZORN'S COBRA** appears on Feb. 27.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room (putting-green green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes) has more of a country-club feel. Vocalist **KARRIN ALLYSON** is in for a one-month run. Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble now in its twentieth year. Closed Sundays.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Tuesdays belong to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird Society Orchestra; Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and his Bourbon Street Swingers; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and bossa nova. On Feb. 23-24: **ANGELA BOFILL.** Bofill was brought up on Latin jazz (by her Cuban father) and Motown soul (by her Puerto Rican mother); both influences are apparent in the singer's repertoire, which emphasizes her sensuous way with a romantic ballad. On Feb. 25-26: the Martinique Carnival arrives at S.O.B.'s, with **CARNIVAL KING MARCE** and his band, **TUMPAK.** Closed Sundays. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A jazz outpost where the musicians are always top-shelf. Through Feb. 27: the **TANA/REID** quintet. Sharing the helm, drummer Akira Tana and bassist Rufus Reid steer a small group whose swing is assured. Beginning March 1: the **JOHN ABERCROMBIE** trio. Dining.

TAVERN ON THE GREEN, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven makes serious jazz fans welcome in the Chestnut Room. It resembles a hunting lodge and is every bit as over the top as the rest of the establishment, but the bookings are impressive. **JIMMY SCOTT** is here through Feb. 27. With good reason, Scott has dropped the "little" that used to front his name—there's nothing diminutive about this fine singer's talent. With his quirky way of looking from one side of the room to the other, he seems to be conducting a discussion. He's always in control musically, too; even on songs you've heard dozens of times before, he makes you listen for the next lyric as if it were a password to love and happiness. Seize the opportunity to see a man who counts Nancy Wilson and Ray Charles among his admirers. Starting March 1: **MARIAN MC PARTLAND.**

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, feels, and smells like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. The **JUNIOR MANCE** trio is here through Feb. 27. A propulsive pianist, Mance will enlist the first-class assistance of Peter Washington (on bass) and Kenny Washington (on drums). The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

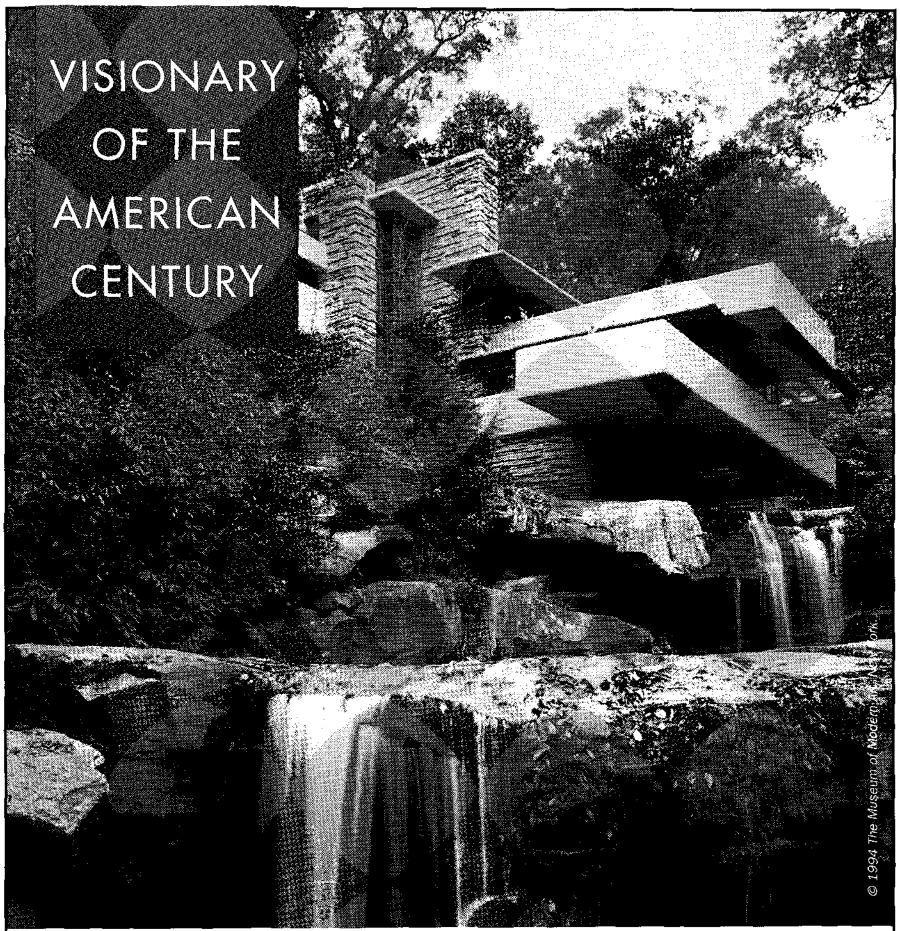
ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—One of those snazzy eateries you've seen nestled amid brownstones in the Village and wondered about. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. **PETE MALINVERNI** and **RALPH LALAMA** arrive for a weeklong visit on Feb. 28. Pianist Malinverni and tenor saxophonist Lalama are two of the most terrifically talented and unrecognized jazzmen in New York.

CABARET

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**KT SULLIVAN** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Sullivan's shows usually include a generous helping of the sort of Broadway and Hollywood songs that endure longer than the musicals for which they were written. Her current program (which will run through Feb. 26) is a tribute to the grandes dames of the silver screen. Late shows are given over to Dietz and Schwartz standards. **STEVE ROSS** and **JEANNE LEHMAN** begin a monthlong engagement on March 1. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. **BETTY** is in through March 12.

CARLYLE HOTEL, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Holy eyelashes, Batman, it's **EARTHA KITT,** in for a six-week run at the Carlyle. Kitt is now in her sixties, and she's still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano.



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RAINBOW & STARS, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view that's as dizzying as the tab. American treasure **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** continues through Feb. 26. Forty-three years after her first hit single, the wacky "Come On-a My House" (which, according to Clooney, featured her own less-than-successful version of an Armenian accent), her supple voice is still as warm and welcoming as her presentation is fresh, assured, and funny. Clooney's current set is devoted to material that salutes "the road." With pianist **JOHN ODDO** (her musical director for the past decade) and a band of other Clooney stalwarts: **WARREN VACHÉ, SCOTT HAMILTON, JAY LEONHART,** and **JOE COCUZZO. SUSANNAH MC CORKLE** begins on March 1. Dining.

RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—**MARGARET WHITING,** appearing on Feb. 27, has been performing since she was knee-high to a grasshopper, which means she's one of the most seasoned professionals in the cabaret business. She was born into a show-biz family whose circle included Al Jolson and Eddie Cantor. Her father, Richard Whiting, is remembered as the composer of many a Tin Pan Alley and Hollywood hit, including "Sleepy Time Gal" and "On the Good Ship Lollipop." Young Margaret just might include one or two in her program, and an especially persuasive audience might induce her to recall her perennially romantic theme song, "Moonlight in Vermont." Champagne, vodka, caviar, and the other major food groups are represented on the menu.

ROCK AND FOLK

ACADEMY, 234 W. 43rd St.—In the heart of the theatre district, a haven for those whose musical tastes run left of "Tommy." **FISHBONE** arrives on Feb. 26. A Fishbone show might be best described as vaudevillian hardcore. It's a remarkable mixture of chaotic humor and volume, and the band often seems to be on the verge of exploding. But, despite Fishbone's spasmodic energy, their material is fairly weak, and by the end of a show you feel as if you've just sat through an Oliver Stone retrospective. For concert information, call 249-8870.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This week, the club continues its twentieth-anniversary celebration, which will run through early April. **TASMIN ARCHER** drops in on Feb. 24. On Feb. 25: **ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION.** Jazz greats **JOHN SCOFIELD** and **GARY BURTON** stop by on Feb. 26. **SOUTHSIDE JOHNNY** appears on Feb. 28.

CAFÉ SIN-É, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront, Sin-é is usually given over to a young, earthy crowd that drinks Rolling Rock or espresso and waits for some Irish musician or other to blow in and play a set. **KATE JACOBS** brings her gently affecting folk songs to the club on Feb. 23. On Feb. 24, singer-songwriter **DANIEL CARTIER** returns, to evoke Generation X ennui in the sweetest tenor (Irish or not) we've heard in a while.

GRAND, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling, with a wall-o'-speakers up front and an ear-decompression lounge around the bar in the back.

IRVING PLAZA, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. **NICK HEYWARD** performs on Feb. 23, with **MOXY FRUVOUS.** Heyward fronted the guilty-pleasure teenybopper outfit Haircut 100 in the early eighties but flew solo after one album—at which point the group's music began to induce less pleasure and more guilt. On his own, the singer has maintained his flair for lightweight pop songs that sound good enough to eat, provided you're not diabetic. Moxy Fruvous is a young Canadian quartet with a decidedly political bent. At times, the band conveys its utopianism with a goofy earnestness; fortunately, though, these fellows sweeten their cant with glowing pop melodies, which makes their début album—"Bargainville"—a pure pleasure. The **WONDER STUFF** and **CHAPTERHOUSE** are here on Feb. 24. Seven years after the U.K. rock press heralded the Wonder Stuff as the next big thing (that week, presumably), the band's sceptered attitude still hasn't made them international stars. On their most recent album, last year's "Construction for the Modern Idiot," the group offers some catchy tunes and plenty of bratty, blasé irony, for those who like that sort of thing. **FISHBONE** warms up for their Academy gig on Feb. 25, and **QUICKSAND** headlines on Feb. 26, with guests Seaweed and Orange 9MM. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

LIMELIGHT, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. Grunge, Flushing style, with **WHITE TRASH** on Feb. 27. **EMERGENCY BROADCAST NETWORK** arrives on March 1. EBN is a trio of former Rhode Island School of Design students who have adapted hip-hop sampling and rhythms to create an alternately hilarious and horrifying video spectacle. (Their doctored clip of George Bush saying "We will rock you" opened U2's Zoo TV tour.) Gulf War footage, assorted talking heads, explosions, cartoons, and other video detritus are mixed and intercut, while deafening beats and sound bites pour out of the sound system. Meanwhile, EBN's MC Josh Pearson exhorts the crowd from the group's "telepodium." It's part channel surfing, part rave, and all very weird.

MANNY'S CAR WASH, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side Blues. **MILO Z & Z FUNK** are in on Feb. 23. On March 1: **THE VOODUDES.**

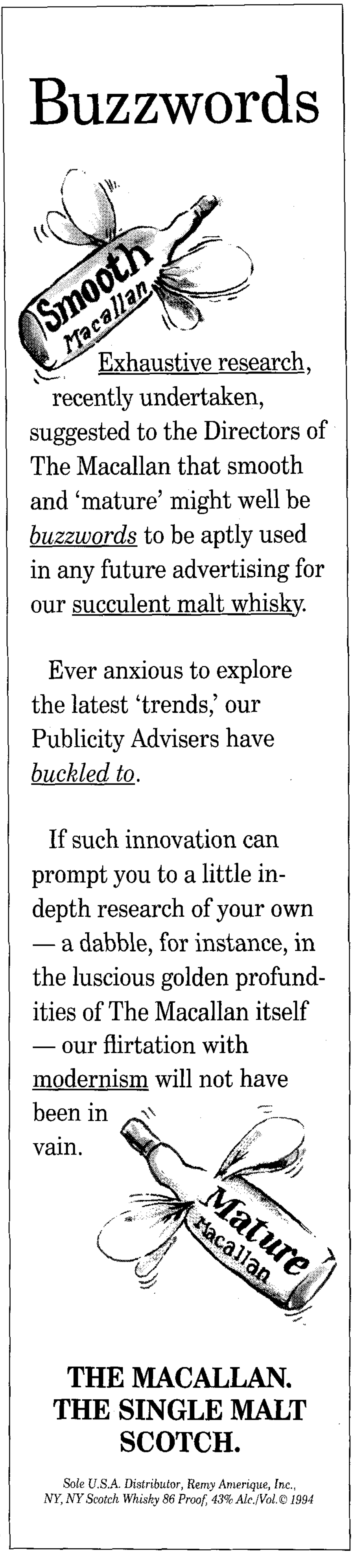
MAXWELL'S, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. **CHAPTERHOUSE** is in on Feb. 25.

PADDY REILLY'S MUSIC BAR, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—This Irish outpost has become known as the birthplace of the roots-and-rebellion rock band Black 47, which acknowledged its paternity by putting a picture of the joint on the cover of its new album, "Fire of Freedom." Prepare for a packed room, flowing Guinness, and an Irish-hootenanny atmosphere. **BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights. When there's no live music, the jukebox blasts everything from the Chieftains to Greg Trooper to Paddy Reilly, the Irish folksinger who owns the place.

ROSELAND, 239 W. 52nd St. (247-0200)—Ballroom dancing on Thursdays and Sundays. The rest of the week: another dark, sweaty rock club, with flannel-clad stage divers and the occasional whirling mosh pit. The **RADIATORS** play on Feb. 26. In a more perfect world, all so-called great bar bands would live up to their hype as gamely as the Radiators do. Led by Ed Volker's hearty singing and boogie-ridden keyboard riffs, this New Orleans-based group delivers its bluesy rock with all the radiant gusto it deserves.

TRAMPS, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The **MARSHALL TUCKER BAND** arrives for two nights beginning Feb. 25. Just because these guys fancy cowboy hats and facial hair, their records are often dumped in Southern Rock bins, but compared to Molly Hatchet and Lynyrd Skynyrd, they're a tuneful and adventurous bunch; their songs even feature the occasional flute solo. On Feb. 27: **JOE HENRY** and **MARK JOHNSON.**

WETLANDS, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—A warehouse complex for neo-hippies and other party animals. Singer-songwriter and Café Sin-é regular **RUTH GERSON** pays a visit on Feb. 24, with guests **HOOTIE AND THE BLOWFISH. WASABI,** featuring members of the Spin Doctors and Blues Traveler, appears on Feb. 27.



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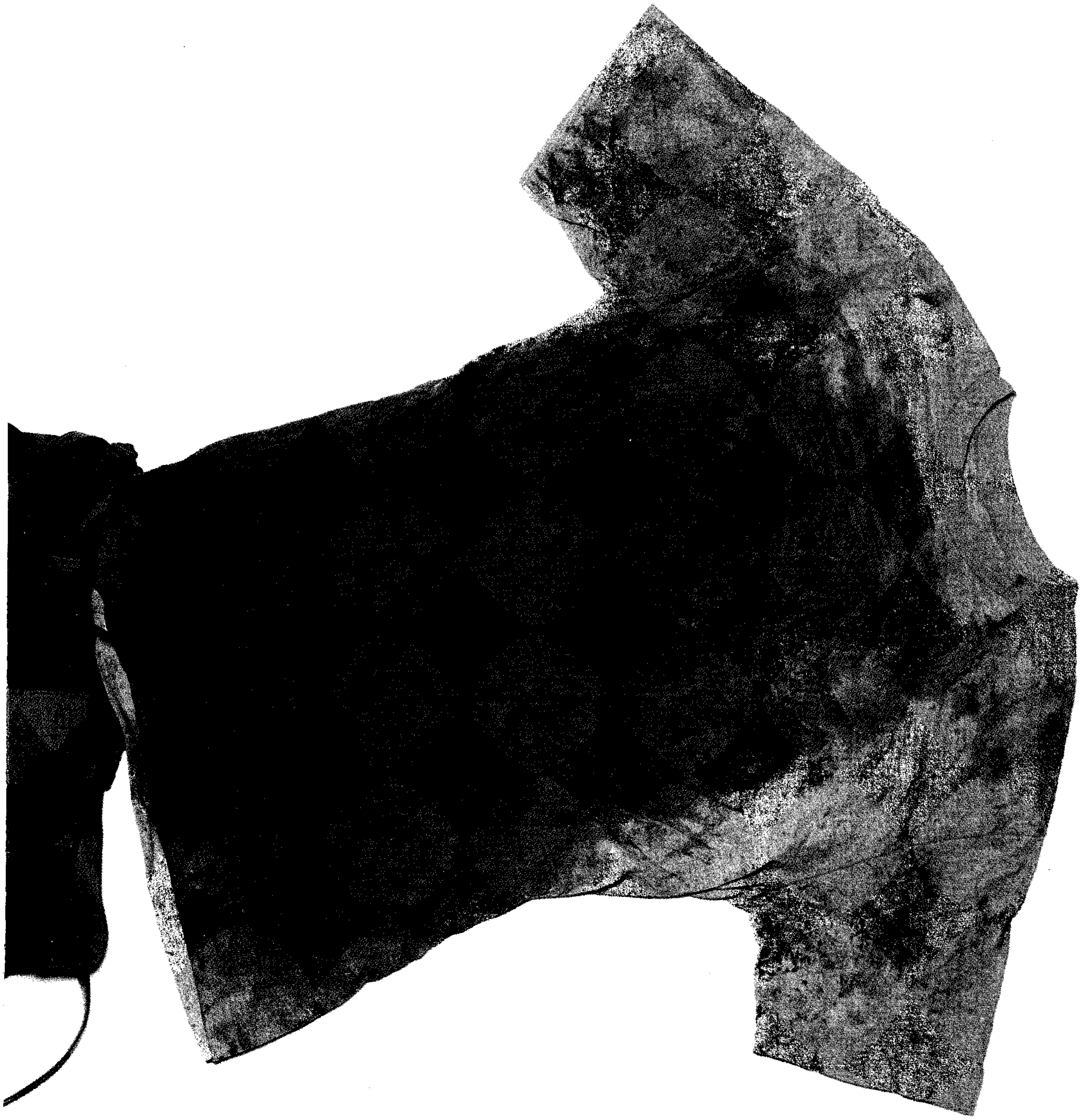

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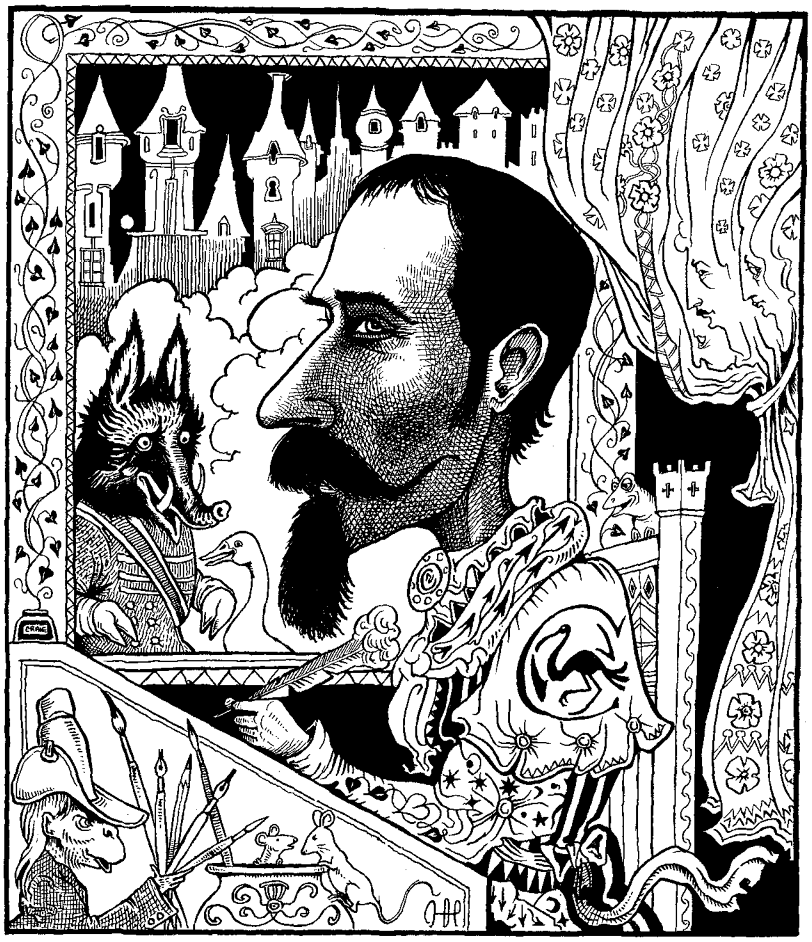
ART

Darkness Visible

LIGHT itself is the primary medium of James Turrell's ambitious yet simple art. Like his fellow-Californian Robert Irwin, Turrell relies on subtle integrations of space and light to render sensually palpable the malleability of perception. His ongoing project at the Roden Crater, an extinct volcanic cone in Arizona's Painted Desert, could prove to be one of the most important art works of our time. Confined to museum or gallery spaces, his effects are less epic but *still* remarkable.

In his current installation, Turrell has reconfigured the space at Barbara Gladstone, evoking a sort of underworld. Taking a sharp turn into a pitch-black corridor, one reaches Turrell's main event, a proscenium-like structure illuminated by a single source of rose light. The reflections off the walls create a mist of ambient light. The effect is less that of hearts and flowers than of vertigo. The walls seem dematerialized, as the roseate light fades on one side into a dense gray. In the Aeneid, Virgil tells us that the road to Hell is easy. He could never have anticipated just how easy Mr. Turrell would make it.



"Walter Crane: Design for Children," at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum.

HARRY HORSE

MUSEUMS

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright." Furniture, ceramics, textiles, sculpture, architectural fragments, photographs, stained glass, metalwork, and drawings. Opens March 1. There is a concurrent show of Wright works at the Museum of Modern Art. . . . ¶ "Degas Landscapes." Seventy-five paintings, pastels, and monotypes, many of them on view for the first time since a solo Degas show in 1892. The oil on paper "Italian Landscape" (1857-58) displays the astonishing pictorial shorthand that flowered in his mature paintings, but the most striking works are the color monotypes, most of which the artist executed in a single concentrated period between 1890 and 1892. Many of them seem not to belong to the nineteenth century. . . . ¶ "The Hero Twins of Ancient Maya Myth: Rollout Photographs by Justin Kerr." Photographs of ceramic vessels from the fourth to the eighth century. . . . ¶ Paintings and drawings from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth by Caspar David Friedrich and Ferdinand Hodler, among others. . . . ¶ "The Golden Age of Danish Painting" features work from the late eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth. . . . ¶ "Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s." . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixteenth-century Italian drawings by Caravaggio, Fra Bartolommeo, Bronzino, and many others. Through March 27. . . . ¶ "Recent Work," a mini-retrospective of more than fifty portraits by Lucian Freud. Through March 13. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute celebrates five decades of the work of Diana Vreeland. Through March 20. . . . ¶ "The Gold of Meroe" features the jewelry of Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe, an ancient Nubian ruler. . . . ¶ "Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art" includes seventy objects, from elephant masks to intricately carved tusks, representing more than twenty different indigenous cultures. . . . ¶ "Immortals and Sages: Fusuma Paintings from Ryoan-ji and the Lore of China in Japanese Art." (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Frank Lloyd Wright: Architect." A retrospective, beginning with work from the eighteen-eighties, that includes some three hundred and fifty drawings, thirty scale models, six full-scale wall constructions, more than a hundred photographs, and architectural fragments. There is a concurrent show of Wright works at the Metropolitan Museum. . . . ¶ "Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee" comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ Twenty-five years of Brooke Alexander Editions, which publishes prints and multiples of contemporary artists, including Richard Artschwager and Lorna Simpson. . . . ¶ "Designed for Speed: Three Automobiles by Ferrari." MOMA's first automobile exhibition in more than fifteen years features three bodacious hot rods: a 1990 Formula One racing car, a 1987 F40 "super car" (the fastest car available for purchase at the time), and a 1950 166MM Barchetta, the prototypical two-seat convertible. . . . ¶ "Gesture and Pose: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the Collection." (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem," a retrospective exhibition, explores the intellectual underpinnings of this protean artist through a selection of his sculptures, drawings, and videos from the early sixties to the present. Morris's career touches on many of the most important artistic developments of the last thirty years—minimalism, performance art, Conceptualism—confounding expectations of aesthetic unity or continuity. His retrospective may seem daunting in its variety and complexity, but it rewards sustained examination as a kind of crash course in American artistic sensibilities since Abstract Expressionism. In conjunction with the artist's show at the Guggenheim SoHo. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—Nine installations with mirrors, by Robert Morris. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), whose art has been so well assimilated into the mainstream that it feels like a kind of modernism lite. The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. . . . ¶ "Industrial Elegance," a lobby exhibition, salutes design excellence in everyday objects, from ice-cube makers to Frisbees. Through March 6. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Collection in Context: A Year from the Collection Circa 1952." Some seventy-five paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings, and photographs. . . . ¶ A dual exhibition of work by photographers Walker Evans (1903-1975) and Dan Graham (born 1942). Both are heavy on urban and suburban drear; tract housing, diners, billboards, and the landscape of commerce are recurrent images. Graham's videos are also on view. Through March 20. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fine art ("Watson and the Shark," by John Singleton Copley), casts of fossils, and a sample of items that have been found in fishes' bellies—armor, hubcaps, a fur coat—are a few of the items in this show devoted to (DUM-dum, DUM-dum, DUM-dum) "Sharks! Fact and Fantasy." There's also a walk-through diorama with life-size models of seventeen species of shark. The lighting and ambient sound make you think you're underwater. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. . . . ¶ More than a hundred realist photographs by Consuelo Kanaga (1894-1978). Through Feb. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"The Ideal Home: 1900-20." Through Feb. 27. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"Asia/America: Identities in Contemporary Asian American Art." The society's first exhibit of contemporary art includes work by twenty Asian-American artists—painters, sculptors, and photographers—most of whom were born in Asia. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays evenings until 8; and Sundays, noon to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-75." . . . ¶ "Walter Crane: Design for Children." An English artist and contemporary of William Morris, Crane (1845-1915) is best known for his fairy-tale illustrations. The exhibit includes these, plus wallcoverings, textiles, and other decorative items. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—An exhibit of Israeli art from the museum's collection, notably "Kaddish," a series of eight etchings by Moshe Gershuni. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing." At the center of this exhibit are the library's three Gutenberg Bibles (the single largest collection in the world) and a replica of the press on which they were printed. On Saturdays and Sundays at 1, there are demonstrations on the press. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—A roomful of portraits of solemn, straitlaced New Englanders by Ammi Phillips (1788-1865), who was a highly successful portrait painter in his time. Phillips relied on similarities of pose, costume, and accessories, yet often succeeded in capturing a particular subject's character. For instance, "Lady in White" has chiselled features and a no-nonsense expression, but her flamboyant headdress and the curve of her mouth suggest a sensual nature. Children also sat for posterity; "Girl in Red Dress with Cat and Dog" is a folk-art classic. . . . ¶ A little-known chapter in craft history is explored in "Northern Scenes: Hooked Art of the Grenfell Mission." Wilfred T. Grenfell developed a cottage industry for the women who lived near his medical outpost in northern Newfoundland: they hooked decorative mats from strips of dyed silk and rayon. Patterns reflected the frozen North: walrus, polar bears, birds and fish, trappers and hunters. The results are stylized and bold, if somewhat static. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Broadway Cavalcade: From the Battery to Harlem" follows the history of the Great White Way, from its origins as an Indian footpath to its fame as the Champs-Élysées of the Big Apple. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Bad Girls" brings a subversive sense of humor to feminist issues. The show features paintings, sculpture, photography, and performance art by more than forty women artists, including Janine Antoni and Nancy Dwyer. Through Feb. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Compleat Charles Addams." Some hundred and seventy drawings and watercolors by the artist; personal memorabilia, including his drawing table; original illustrations for "The Chas Addams Mother Goose"; and life-size photographs of the movie and television characters, next to enlargements of the cartoon originals. (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6, and Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"The House I Live In: American Performance in the Era of Blacklisting" documents the effects of blacklisting in the entertainment industry. (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

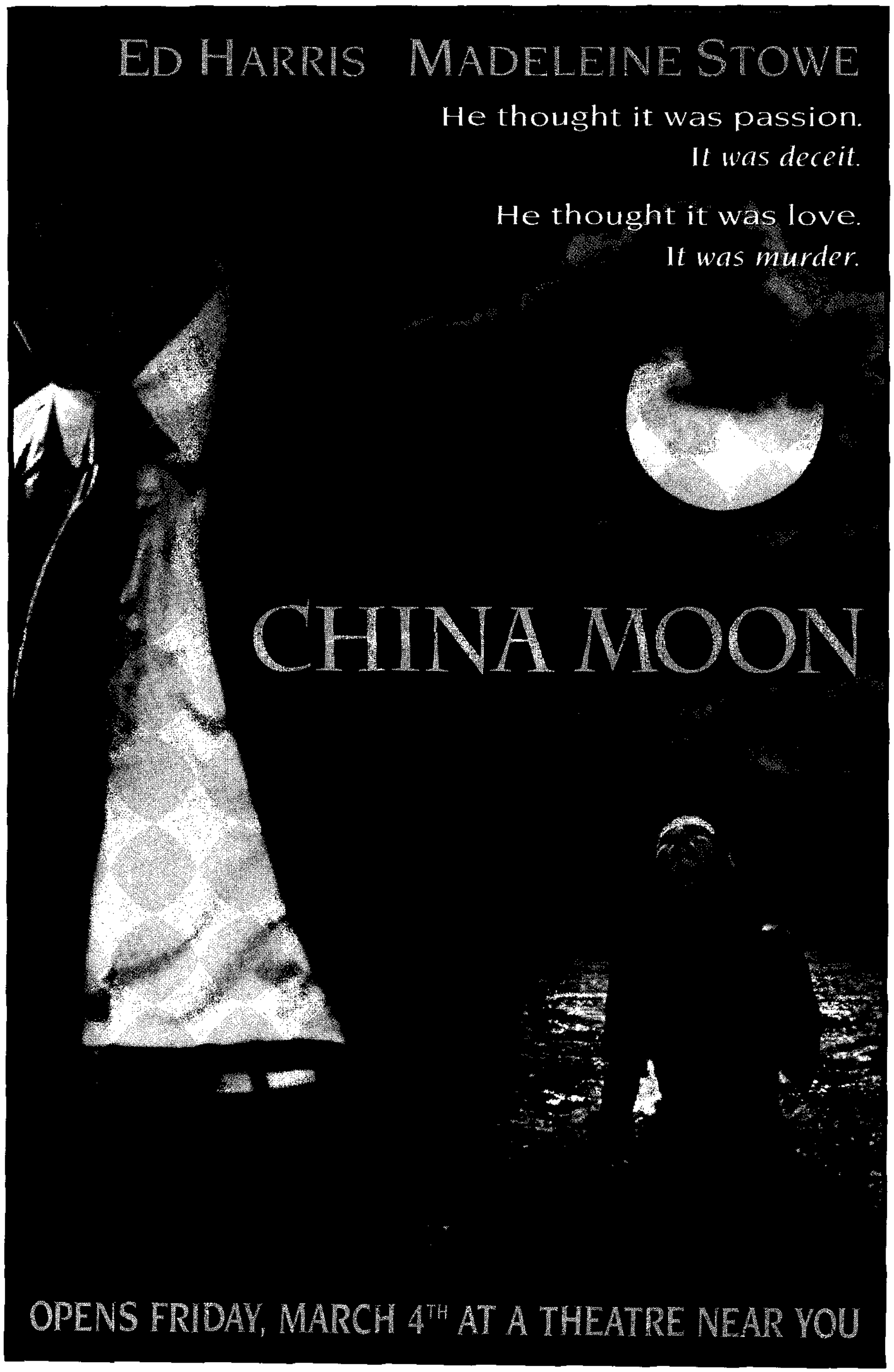
Joan Miró (1893-1983)—Drawings that have not been shown since 1941. Opens Feb. 24. Through March 26. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Harry Roseman—A series of drawings and etchings of interwoven lines. Opens March 1. Through March 26. (Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St.)

•

Richmond Burton—Abstract oil paintings on linen, by an artist pursuing the elaboration of formal effects. In each painting, protoplasmic cells of color are loosely organized on an underlying grid, creating an impression of circulatory movement. Burton also achieves a trippy effect of optical pulsation. Through March 19. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Joseph Cornell (1903-72)—Collages spanning


ED HARRIS MADELEINE STOWE
He thought it was passion.
It was deceit.
He thought it was love.
It was murder.
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the artist's career. Through March 12. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

RICHARD DIEBENKORN (1922-93)—There's no mistaking Richard Diebenkorn's Ocean Park series. The paintings on paper (1971-92) have a certainty of line and the California colors (beyond pastel, but not quite primary) that are his signature. The larger works (approximately three by two feet) look like gaily painted weatherworn wooden doors. As you come close enough to see the painted-over lines and the translucent gouache on the surface, you have an illusion of pentimento, as if the layers of the painting have been stripped away. The work in the downstairs room is less remarkable, but the etchings provide a glimpse of Diebenkorn's early use of line. Through March 8. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

PHILIP EVERGOOD (1901-73)—Nine paintings, the majority of which reveal the artist's political concerns. Through March 12. (Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St.)

ALAN FELTUS—In "Two Years in Umbria," Feltus pays a strange and delightful tribute to the Italian master Piero della Francesca. Instead of religious scenes or papal figures, his paintings are like snapshots of domestic life, with della Francesca-like backgrounds of simple geometric forms that suggest architectural perspective. The flat brushwork gives these works a print-like quality; disaffected couples in interior scenes seem to be immersed in nostalgia. Through March 5. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

MORRIS HIRSHFIELD (1872-1946)—Primitive paintings and working drawings. Through March 19. (Janis, 110 W. 57th St.)

JOE LASKER—Landscapes, interiors, and scenes of New York. Through March 12. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

FERNAND LÉGER (1881-1955)—A show of tapestries and mosaics, focussing on the artist's well-known themes: "Les Loisirs," "Les Constructeurs," and "Les Trois Musiciens"; also, small ceramic sculptures. Through April 2. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

ALICE NEEL (1900-84)—Paintings of Spanish Harlem, where the artist lived from 1938 to 1961. Through March 19. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

MARK ROTHKO (1903-70)—Twelve paintings from 1969, by this renowned Abstract Expressionist. Through March 19. (Pace, 32 E. 57th St.)

CHARLES SELIGER—Small-scale organic abstractions done in the past several years. Through April 2. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St.)

KENNETH SNELSON—Sculptures, from 1959 to 1993, parts of which are held in place by wires and appear to be suspended in mid-air. Through April 9. (Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

MYRON STOUT (1908-87)—Vivid, sometimes garish abstract paintings, dating from the early nineteen-fifties, by an artist best known for his meditative black-and-white abstractions. Through March 12. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

WILLIAM TUCKER—Abstract plaster and bronze sculptures. Through April 2. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

"ALTERNATIVE VISIONS"—French wallpapers of the nineteenth century shown alongside works by Brice Marden, Agnes Martin, Carl Andre, and others, to point out their similarities. Through April 2. (Mathes, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

"ART SHOW"—The Art Dealers Association of America is holding its sixth annual benefit show, with works in various mediums offered by art galleries from around the country. (Seventh Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 67th St. Feb. 24-25, from noon to 8; Feb. 26-27, from noon to 7; Feb. 28, from noon to 6. Tickets at the door on the days of the show.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

William Steiger—Paintings relating to the artist's monumental industrial structures, plus one of a Ferris wheel. Opens March 1. Through March 26. (Condeso/Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

Chris Burden—"America's Darker Moments," a series of tiny cast-tin figures grouped to represent such scenes as the Kennedy assassination and the Kent State uprising; "L.A.P.D. Uniform," an edition of thirty overscale uniforms; and "Small Guns," a series of incongruously juxtaposed objects. Opens Feb. 26. Through March 26. (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Lester Johnson—Near-monochromatic oils from the sixties, when Johnson kept a studio on the Bowery; painted over and over, the final versions coalesce into elusive figures. Opens Feb. 26. Through April 2. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

◆

Stephen Mueller—Abstract paintings in vaporous acrylics. The shapes suggest cells, aureoles, eyeballs, and ectoplasmic apparitions. A few paintings make explicit Mueller's interest in mystical experience. Images of handprints and footprints allude to the iconography of Tibetan Buddhist painting. But Mueller's mysticism looks synthetic as well as atmospheric: his spirit entities seem to have been rendered in spray paint. Through March 3. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Daniel Oates—Funny/strange and funny/ha-ha sculptures by a young British artist. Oates' earlier, U.K.-specific work addressed the condition of the working class in a post-industrial economy in which almost everyone was on the dole. His current show is local and topical: midget figures of N.Y.P.D. cops are flanked on one side by their huge holstered Smith & Wessons and on the other by an oversize bedside table containing a similar weapon. Routine surrealist games of altered scale are at work here, but the cops are amusingly grotesque. Through March 12. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Richard Bosman—"Fragments," small-scale paintings and sculptures of hands and feet. Through March 25. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St.)

Greg Colson—Assemblages of workbench and household scraps, by a Los Angeles artist. Through March 19. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

James Croak / Jean Feinberg—Life-size sculptures of male nudes, cast in soil. / Abstract paintings. Through March 19. (Stux, 163 Mercer St.)

George Dokoupil—Paintings of refugees, made with candle soot. Through March 12. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

Jackie Ferrara—Wooden architectural models for swimming-pool complexes, mounted on tables or shelves. Through March 19. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Ellen Kozak—A series of liquid, limpid landscapes of the Hudson River Valley. Each richly colored work has been carefully built up with eight to ten layers of oil paint. The results are almost aquatic, like underwater scenes. In "Notations on a Landscape, Wake," amoebic loops of color—a yellowish tan and a plum brown—overlap and merge into mauve. Several watercolors, studies for some of the works, are also on display. Through March 15. (Roy, 46 Greene St.)

Norm Magnusson—Animals abound in these whimsical acrylic paintings, produced while the artist was in Normandy. Though the titles are French ("La Pomme et l'Âne," "La Chasse"), the bright colors, rough-hewn wooden frames, and dotted surfaces give the works a folkish air. The artist anthropomorphizes his subjects, using spiral swirls to give his dogs a kind of manic intensity. Conversely, he depicts himself as a large brown bear in his self-portrait, "Ursa Major" (in which every constellation is correctly in place). Despite the humor, some of the images are oddly moving—for instance, the blackbird in "Oiseau Sous les Étoiles" or the tagged cow with a roulette wheel spinning around it in "When Your Number's Up." Through March 12. (Bridgewater Lustberg, 529 Broadway. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 6.)

Gary Passanise—Abstract paintings. Through March 5. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Beth Ames Swartz—Spiritual, cosmological paintings. Through March 19. (Donahue, 560 Broadway.)

James Turrell—The artist has reconfigured the gallery to create what he calls a "structure of light." Through March 5. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

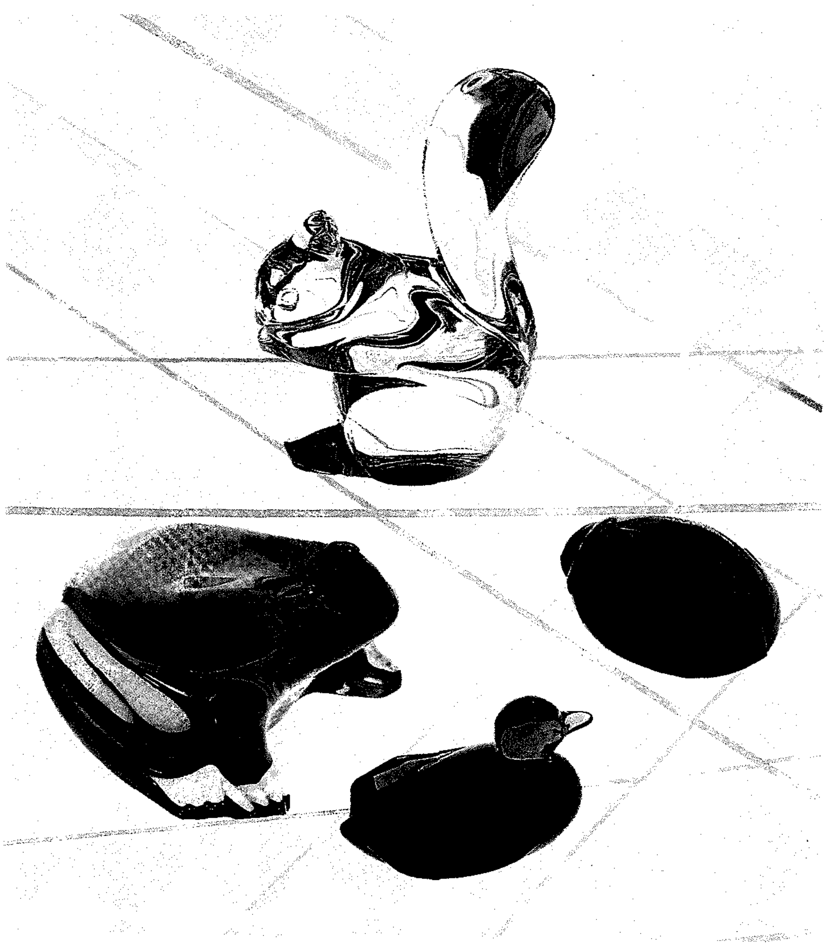
Kevin Wixted—Oil and wax in organic colors on wood panels with architectural forms. Through March 19. (Beitzel, 102 Prince St.)

Robert Zakanitch—"The Big Bungalow Suite," a group of four paintings, each depicting an enormous curtain of floral imagery with an inset window giving onto a country landscape or waterfall. Through March 31. (McCoy, 129 Greene St.) . . . **note:** Paintings from 1991 to the present are showing concurrently at McCoy, 41 E. 57th St., through March 12.

ANTIQUES

On the Piers—A walloping show of more than six hundred exhibits. In this second and final weekend, there's a tempest over teapots, which may be replacing the cookie jar as the hot collectible. On Pier 88 you'll find fifties teapots, shaped like poodles, clowns, nursery characters, and the like; on Pier 90 ceramic teapots from the Arts and Crafts movement; and on Pier 92 classic porcelain and silver English teapots. (Pier 88, Twelfth Ave. at 48th St.: Feb. 26-27, from 11 to 6. Pier 90, Twelfth Ave. at 50th St.: Feb. 26, from 9 to 6, and Feb. 27, from 11 to 5. Pier 92, Twelfth Ave. at 52nd St.: Feb. 26, from 10 to 6, and Feb. 27, from 11 to 6. Tickets are available at the doors on the days of the expo.)

Black History—The people at the Metropolitan Arts & Antiques Pavilion have rounded up thirty-five dealers for a show of Black History and Culture Collectibles. Among the offerings are a Martin Luther King "I Have a Dream" watch ($400), a signed Paul Robeson record album from the fifties ($250), and a Second World War photograph of a petty officer ($75). (110 W. 19th St. Feb. 25 preview, from 6 to 9; Feb. 26-27, from 10 to 5. Tickets are available at the door on the days of the show.)



Photography: Rick Young Creative Consultant: Jean-Yves Legrand

Squirrel, created in 1962; Green Frog, Created in 1964
Petit Bijoux: Duck, Ladybug, created 1992

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Eye on the Ball

JAMES DANZIGER, of the Danziger Gallery, has collaborated with the curator Keith de Lellis in assembling a show of twentieth-century sports photography that sidesteps the genre approach to the subject. (It's at Danziger, 130 Prince Street; through March 15.) Instead of nostalgia pieces, or the kind of technically proficient but forgettable images we see every day in print and on television, Danziger and de Lellis present pictures in which the imagination and inventiveness of the photographers often matches the prowess of the athletes. Although it's a small and rather miscellaneous show, its scattered approach and its leaps are precisely what give it interest and texture.

Jacques-Henri Lartigue's vivacious action shots of tennis star Suzanne Lenglan, taken in 1915, may seem antique—her elaborate outfit (dress, hat, and arm bracelets) and even her playing stance are definitely gawky by today's standards—but her forearm looks like a weapon worthy of Martina Navratilova. Charles Conlin's tight-cropped 1927 portraits of Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, and Bob Meusel are in-your-face psychological studies that grippingly depict strength of will and focussed intensity even as they uncover the familiar and vulnerable humanity of the athletes. The most lyrical work in the show is Flip Schulke's underwater photography. In one shot, fish and other marine life are swimming along, minding their own business, as water-skiers swoosh by above. In other pictures, the submarine specimen is Muhammad Ali. Apparently, the boxer, then an unknown named Cassius Clay, was so eager to be photographed that he told Schulke that training underwater was part of his regimen. It wasn't. But Schulke took the bait, and out of this fish story came some terrific shots.

KENRO IZU—Floral studies and nudes. Through March 5. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

WILMAR KOENIG—Photographs taken in natural-history museums in Europe and America. Through Feb. 26. (Borden, 560 Broadway.)

SUSAN RANKAITIS—Photographs treated with paint, chemical washes, and other materials. Through March 12. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

"DEVOTION, FAITH AND FERVOR"—A small show of images from 1930 to 1992, documenting religious life in the rural South. Pictures by Walker Evans, Margaret Bourke-White, Robert Frank, Eudora Welty, and several lesser-known photographers. Through March 5. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St.)

"NEW TRADITIONS"—Work by three contemporary photographers—Frederic Ohringer, Michael O'Neill, and Vernon Miller—who create lushly textured prints. Through Feb. 26. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

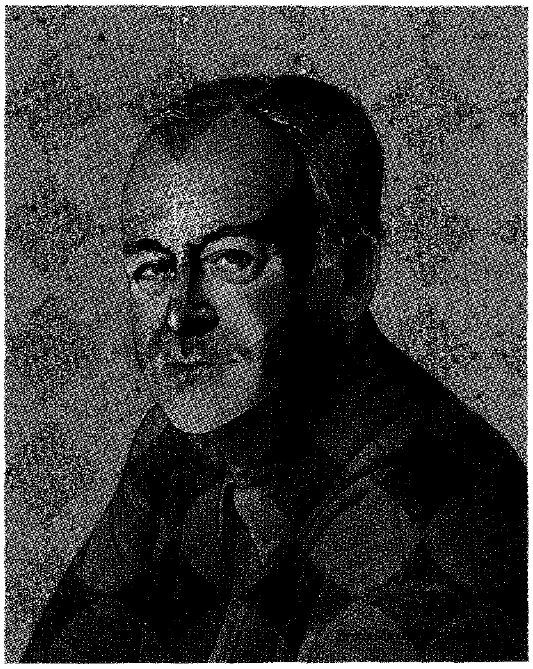
INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Cycles," a retrospective of work by Judy Dater. Through April 3. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Goin' Home

FOR a brief moment, it seemed as if the Dvořák frenzy were about to abate. But no: his minions were just regrouping for the next onslaught. Even after a year of Dvořák-drenched concert programming, a new "Rusalka" at the Met, a play-and-say exposition at Bard College (plus its recapitulation at Lincoln Center, not to mention the Brooklyn Philharmonic's copycat version in January), the sanctification of the Czech master is not complete. It is no longer enough simply to enjoy the "New World" Symphony or the "Slavonic Dances"; the current hagiography insists that we venerate Dvořák as the proto-multiculturalist, the ancestor of all who believe that music must transcend national, ethnic, and economic boundaries.



José van Dam at Carnegie Hall.

BROOK MEINHARDT

Even after the adulation recedes, Dvořák will remain a part of New York's history, thanks to his three-year residence here a hundred years ago, during which he directed the National Conservatory. Plans are afoot to install a statue of Dvořák (now squirrelled away on the roof of Avery Fisher Hall) in Stuyvesant Square Park, just across from the site on East 17th Street where his home stood until it was razed in 1991 (after the City Council annulled its landmark status). To raise funds for the project, Dvořák enthusiasts will gather on February 27 at the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church to perform some Dvořák works that are masterpieces (like the A-Major Piano Quintet) and some that are not (say, his arrangement of Stephen Foster's "Old Folks at Home"). The apotheosis continues.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**DEATH IN VENICE,** with Anthony Rolfe Johnson and Thomas Allen; conducted by David Atherton. (Feb. 23 at 8 and Feb. 26 at 1:30.) . . . **LE NOZZE DI FIGARO,** with Helen Donath, Marie McLaughlin, Susanne Mentzer, Dwayne Croft, and James Morris; Julius Rudel. (Feb. 24 at 8.) . . . **DIALOGUES OF THE CARMELITES,** sung in English, with Dawn Upshaw, Teresa Stratas, Heidi Grant Murphy, Helga Dernesch, and Florence Quivar; Kent Nagano. (Feb. 25 and Feb. 28 at 8.) . . . **LA FILLE DU RÉGIMENT,** with Harolyn Blackwell, Rosalind Elias, Stanford Olsen, Bruno Praticò and, in a speaking role, Beatrice Arthur; Edoardo Müller. (Feb. 26 at 8.) . . . With François Loup as Sulpice. (March 1 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

MANNES OPERA—Presenting "Gianni Schicchi," staged, with piano accompaniment. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. Feb. 23 and Feb. 25 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Leonard Slatkin conducts the première of Barbara Kolb's "All in Good Time," Sibelius's Violin Concerto (with Joshua Bell), and Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 2 (the "London"). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 24-25 at 8 and March 1 at 7:30.)

BACHANALIA FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA—At Merkin Concert Hall, with violinist/violist Nina Beilina directing the string orchestra and doubling as soloist in programs that mix orchestral and chamber pieces. Feb. 24 at 8: Mozart's "Serenata Notturna," Wolf's "Italian Serenade," and the première of a dance suite by Michael Moriarty, among other works. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8: Bach's Trio Sonata from "A Musical Offering," an Ignaz Holzbauer viola and cello concerto, and Schubert's C-Major String Quintet, among other works. . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 3: A program that includes Britten's "Lachrymae" and Bach's Concerto for Three Violins and the "Brandenburg" Concertos No. 5 and No. 6.

GREGG SMITH SINGERS—Performing recent choral works by eight composers. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 26 at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-2990.)

BRANDENBURG ENSEMBLE—The conductorless orchestra offers an all-Bach concert: the First Orchestral Suite, D-Minor Keyboard Concerto (with pianist Peter Serkin), E-Minor Violin Concerto (with Pamela Frank), and Fifth "Brandenburg" Concerto (with flutist Michael Parloff joining Ms. Frank and Mr. Serkin). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 27 at 3.)

NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY—Miguel Harth-Bedoya conducts Prokofiev's Symphony No. 5, a new work by Deniz Ince, and two pieces featuring clarinettist David Shifrin: Rossini's "Introduction, Theme, and Variations" and Debussy's "Première Rapsodie." (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 27 at 3. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 903-9460.)

AMERICAN SYMPHONY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA—Steven Lipsitt conducts music by composers who were Masons, including Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Sibelius, Sousa, and Berlin; with soloists Mary Ann Bozzuti (soprano) and Carl Halvorson (tenor). (Masonic Hall, 71 W. 23rd St. Feb. 27 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-800 362-7664.)

ITALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF BERGAMO—Tiziano Severini conducts Rossini's "La Scala di Seta" Overture, Schumann's Piano Concerto (with Leon Bates), Bruno Bettinelli's "Two Inventions for Strings," and Mendelssohn's Symphony No. 4. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 27 at 8:30.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts Schubert's Symphony No. 2 in B-Flat Major and Respighi's "La Boutique Fantasque"; also works by Mozart and Strauss, featuring soprano Kathleen Battle. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Housing Authority Symphony Alumni—Founded in 1971, the New York City Housing Authority Orchestra performs symphonic music in neighborhoods that are otherwise ill-exposed to classical music. Musicians who have played with the orchestra over the years (including several who have gone on to distinguished performing careers) will play Mendelssohn's String Symphony No. 8; concertos by Vivaldi, Telemann, and Bach (his Fourth "Brandenburg" Concerto); and Beethoven's F-Major String Quartet (Op. 18, No. 1). A benefit concert. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 28 at 8. For information about tickets, call 306-3747.)

RECITALS

Colorado String Quartet—The distaff foursome performs quartets by Haydn (in E Major, Op. 54, No. 3), Mendelssohn (in F Minor, Op. 80), and Britten (his Third). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 23 at 8.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing works by Ingolf Dahl and George Tsontakis; pianist Alan Feinberg assists, and offers a piano-and-tape piece by Charles Dodge. (Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway. Feb. 23 at 8. For information about tickets, call 840-7470.)

Emma Tahmizian—The Bulgarian pianist performs Beethoven's Sonata in C Minor (Op. 111) and the New York première of Sebastian Currier's "Theo's Sketchbook," among other works. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 23 at 8.)

"Catalyst in Concert"—Here's a turnaround: The BMG Classics recording company presents live reënactments of performances issued in its contemporary-music series. Feb. 23: Richard Westenburg performs partly notated, partly improvised synthesizer works, collaborating in several with soprano Cynthia Richards Wallace and tenor Thomas Bogdan; in addition, organist Donald Joyce plays music by Philip Glass. . . . ¶ Feb. 24: Violinist Maria Bachmann and pianist Jon Klibonoff perform works by Arvo Pärt, Paul Moravec, Albert Glinsky, John Corigliano, and James MacMillan; Toby Twining's vocal ensemble performs original works. . . . ¶ Feb. 25: Musica Sacra (directed by Richard Westenburg) performs choral music by Ricky Ian Gordon, Kim Sherman, Robert Moran, Ligeti, Messiaen, Meredith Monk, Kim Sherman, and David Baker. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Evenings at 8. For information about tickets, call 874-3104.)

Bargemusic—Pianist Haesun Paik performs Liszt's "Réminiscences de 'Don Juan' "; violinist Ik-Hwan Bae and cellist Fred Sherry join her to play piano trios by Haydn (in D Minor) and Beethoven (the "Archduke"). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Feb. 24 at 7:30 and Feb. 27 at 4.)

Of Interest to Film Buffs—Two events relating to the cinema. Feb. 25 at 7: A screening of the 1928 Charlie Chaplin silent film "The Circus," with Gillian Anderson conducting an ensemble from the Manhattan School of Music in a score she uncovered in the Chaplin archives. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 8: The Andiamo Chamber Ensemble presents a lecture/concert exploring music written for films (or theatre), or by composers who are principally known for their film scores; including Bernard Herrmann's "Echoes" (for string quartet) and Miklos Rosza's Piano Sonata. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the event.)

José van Dam—Bass-baritone, singing Schumann's "Dichterliebe" and songs by Duparc; with pianist Maciej Pikulski. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Julianne Baird and Eliot Fisk—The soprano and the classical guitarist perform works by Roberto Gerhard, Ginastera, Rodrigo, and others. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 25 at 8.)

Continuum—The contemporary-music ensemble performs seven works by the late Morton Feldman, including his vast, slowly unrolling masterpiece, "Rothko Chapel" (for chorus, soloists, and instrumental ensemble); with the Florilegium Chamber Choir. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 26 at 7.)

Emerson String Quartet—Performing the final quartets of Beethoven (in F Major, Op.135) and Shostakovich (his No. 14 and No. 15). (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 26 at 8.)

Leontyne Price—The inimitable soprano performs a wide-ranging program that includes arias by Handel, Mozart, and Verdi, and songs by Joseph Marx, Poulenc, and Lee Hoiby; with pianist David Garvey. (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Feb. 27 at 2.)

Dvořák Celebration—An all-Dvořák concert, including the original version for winds, strings, and piano of the String Serenade (Op. 22), with Steven Richman leading the Harmonie Ensemble; the A-Major Piano Quintet (with pianist Rudolf Firkušný and the Guarneri Quartet), the Slavonic Dances No. 1 and No. 8 (in a piano four-hands version, with Avner Arad joining Mr. Firkušný), and Dvořák's choral arrangement of Foster's "Old Folks at Home" (with bass-baritone William Warfield as soloist). A benefit concert. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Feb. 27 at 3. For information about tickets, call 475-2850.)

Bridgehampton Chamber Music—Presenting chamber works by Mozart, Stravinsky (his New York "L'Histoire du Soldat"), Brahms (his G-Minor Piano Quartet,) and Schickele. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 27 at 5. For information about tickets, call 750-5776.)

New York Flute Club—For the past two centuries, the Paris Conservatoire has required a steady stream of new compositions—often by Conservatoire-affiliated composers—for its annual examinations of instrumental students. Most (or, to be perfectly honest, all) of the resulting repertoire is minor, but some of it is eminently programmable; and for instrumentalists otherwise short on things to play, like oboists and bassoonists, these *morceaux de concert*

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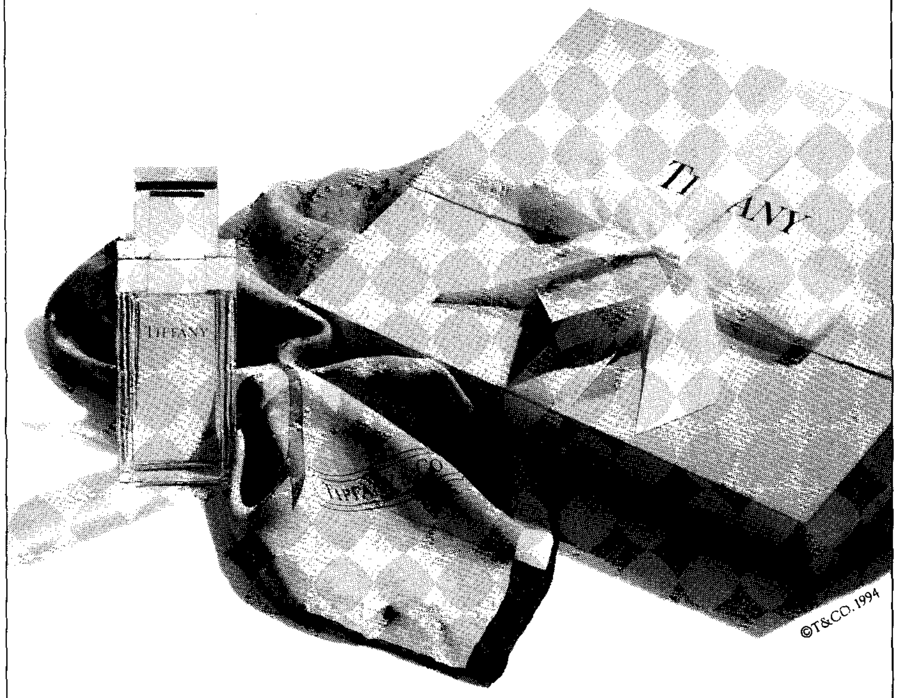

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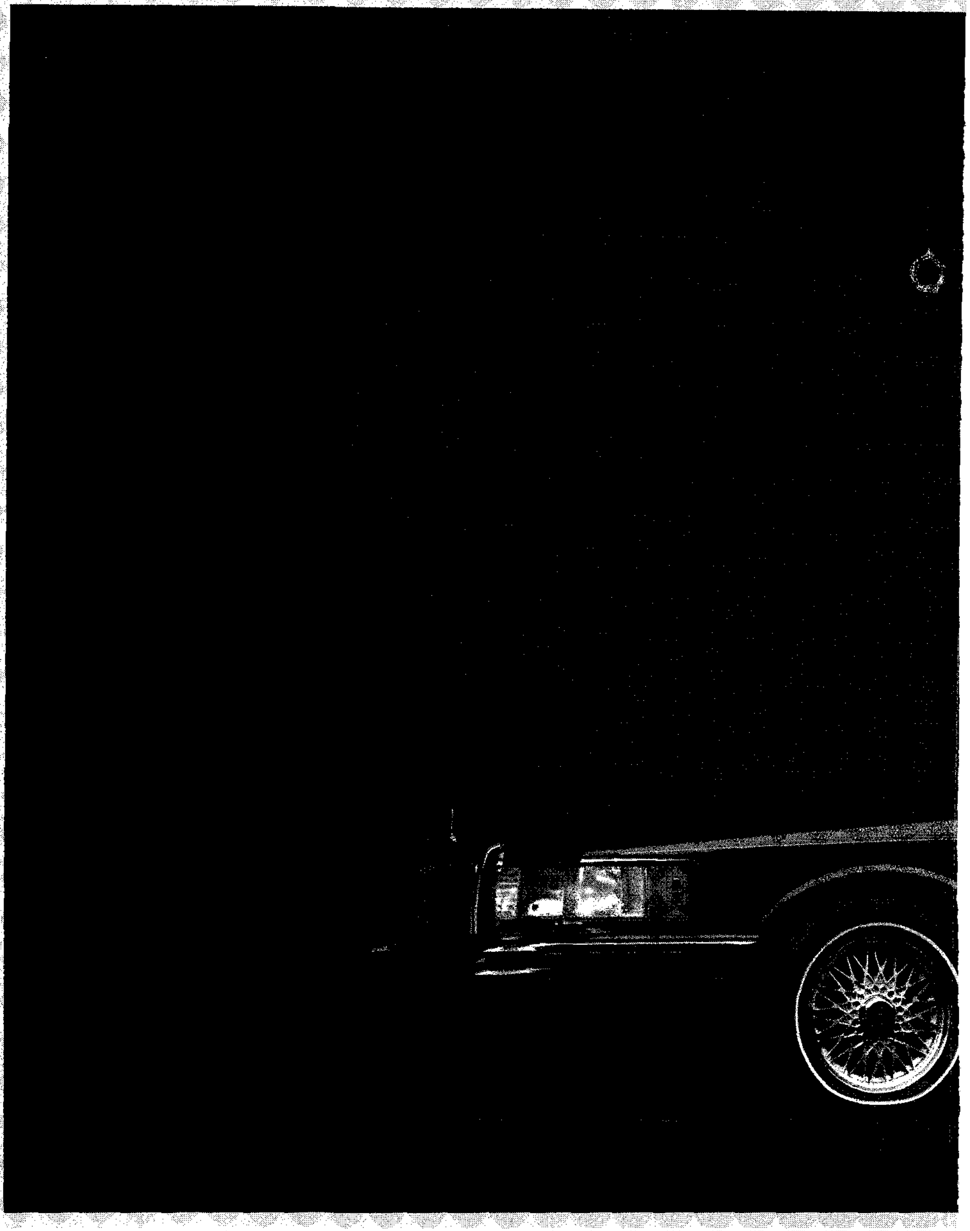

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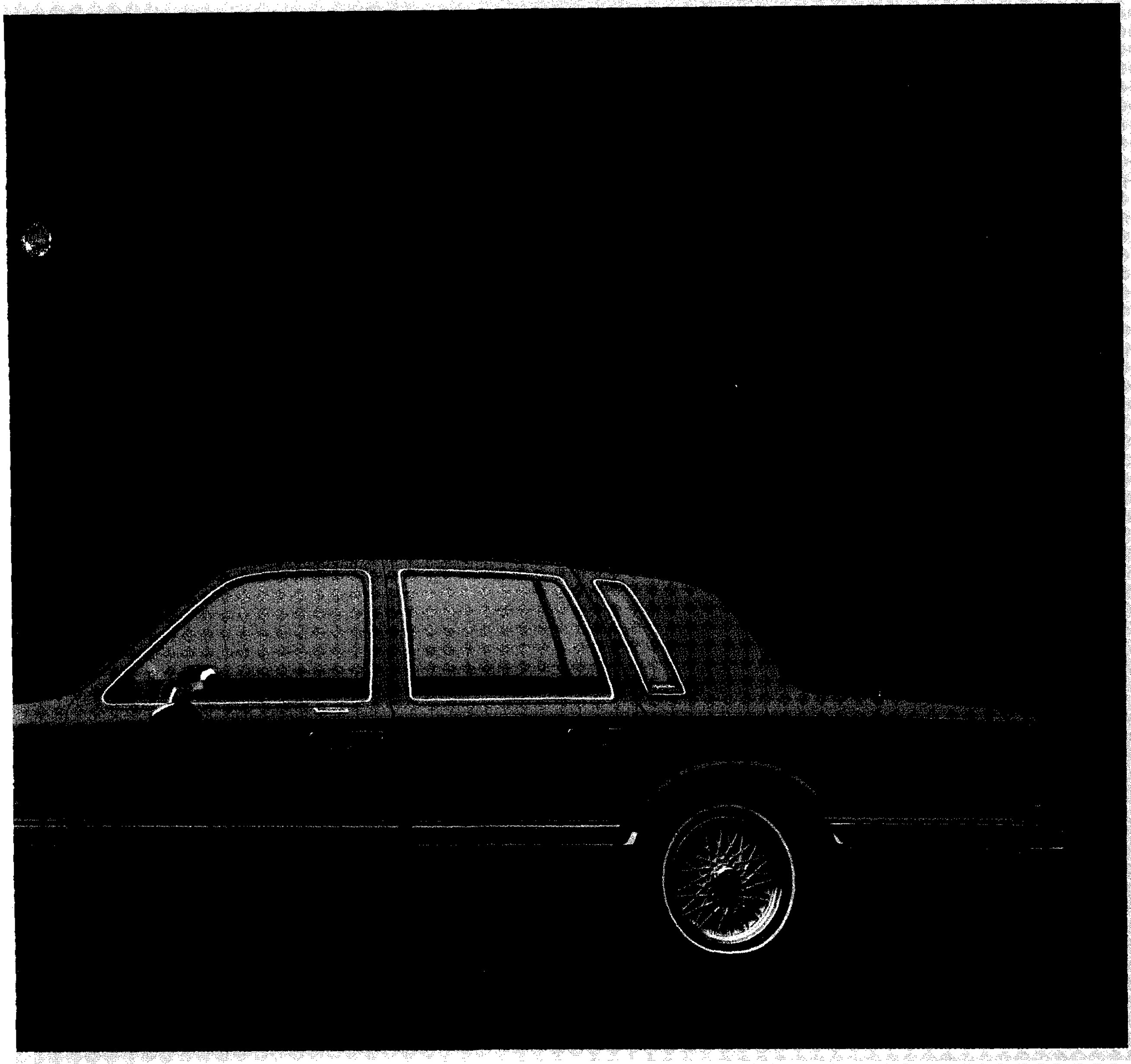

vement Award.

spaciousness of its interior. You could go on about Lincoln's commitment to safety technology that includes standard ABS brakes and dual air bags.* And you'll never run out of compliments for its proliferation of elegant appointments. Finally, you might praise the powerful V-8 engine, and the smoothness of that legendary quiet ride. And every Lincoln is backed by the Lincoln Commitment, a comprehensive ownership benefits program that includes 24-hour Roadside Service Assistance.

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LINCOLN

What A Luxury Car Should Be

MUSIC—Cont'd

and *morceaux de lecture* can be a godsend, since they're sometimes by composers whose names are at least recognizable, or even famous. Flutists Linda Marianiello, Bart Feller, and Mindy Kaufman present a program of such "Conservatoire classics," including works by Philippe Gaubert, Cécile Chaminade, Pierre Sancan, Georges Enesco, Fauré, Alfred Casella, and Eugène Bozza. (CAMI Hall, 165 W. 57th St. Feb. 27 at 5:30. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Samuel Bartos—The pianist performs Beethoven's last piano sonata (Op. 111); cellist George Dewar joins him for the composer's final cello sonata (Op. 102, No. 2). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 27 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

New York New Music Ensemble—Performing recent works by Robert Black, Martin Brody, James Primosch, and David Schiff. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Tomohiro Okumura—The violinist, winner of the 1993 Naumberg International Violin Competition, performs (with the assistance of pianist Rohan De Silva) Takemitsu's "Hika" and sonatas by Bach (in A Minor), Bartók (his First), and Saint-Saëns (his First). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 28 at 8.)

Cleveland String Quartet—Performing Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" Quartet and Beethoven's Quartet in C-Sharp Minor (Op. 131). (Carnegie Hall. March 1 at 8.)

Chamber Players of the League/ISCM—Performing works by seven modern composers. (Merkin Concert Hall. March 1 at 8.)

SPORTS

The Golden Spike—Truck in two hundred and forty tons of sand, set up a few beach chairs, pump up those lightweight balls, and you've got a Pro Beach Volleyball Championship. At center stage, eight two-man teams will spike, dig, and power serve in this single-elimination tournament. During intermissions, there will be karaoke and hula-hoop contests and interactive skill games on the Boardwalk. Party on, dude. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Feb. 26, from 1 to 9.)

Crown of Bagel—The New York Road Runners Club's annual Bagel Run is in Central Park, on Feb. 27 at 10 A.M. The king and queen of the day, the fastest man and woman, will be crowned with—what else?—enormous bagels, before leading finishers to a groaning board of bagels, lox, and cream cheese. The run starts near Columbus Circle. For more information, call 860-4455.

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Away until March 3, when they'll face the Nets.

Nets—Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Feb. 27 at 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Detroit Pistons, March 1 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Boston Bruins, Feb. 23 at 7:30.

Islanders—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Feb. 25 at 7:40. . . . ¶ Vs. the Quebec Nordiques, Feb. 27 at 7:10. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Blues, March 1 at 7:40.

Devils—Vs. the Rangers, Feb. 24 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Blues, Feb. 28 at 7:35.

(The Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

The Real Stars—Each year, City Lore, the New York Center for Urban Folk Culture, selects a handful of "ordinary" New Yorkers (these aren't faces you'd recognize from the Styles section) to induct into its People's Hall of Fame. The prize is a subway token the size of a dinner plate, and the winners are people who have been around for years, just doing what they do best—singing gospel songs, playing klezmer music, revitalizing a neighborhood, or supervising the Names Project AIDS quilt. There will be performances or slide shows by this year's inductees: Sid Beckerman, Lillie Mae Butler, Juan Gutiérrez, Kool DJ Herc, Cleve Jones and Bob Wilson, and Fay Chew Matsuda and Jack Tchen (representing the Chinese History Museum). Checkers and swing dancing will follow. (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Feb. 23, from 6 to 9. For information about tickets, call 529-1955.)

So Eat, Eat—You want to know from eating in New York? Go listen to Julia Child and Pierre Franey talk about "The Joys of Eating in New York." Gael Greene, the food critic from *New York,* will be there, too. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 23 at 8.)

Used—"Visual Instructions & User Manuals," at the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology, includes some three hundred manuals, signs, and photographs (everything from airplane-instruction cards to a cartoon of washing machines sweating in the sun) to show the variety of ways information is disseminated (and, in some cases, why it's misunderstood). (Seventh Ave. at 27th St. Tuesdays through Fridays, from noon to 8, and Saturdays, from 10 to 5. No tickets necessary.)

Chindo Sikkim Kut—As part of the Asia Society's Festival of Korea, there will be a Chindo Sikkim Kut—a ritual with shamans and musicians from Chindo, an island in southwest Korea. The ceremony will include drama, dance, music, song, and ritual offerings. (Park Ave. at 70th St. 517-2742. Feb. 25-26 at 8 and Feb. 27 at 7.)

Here's Beckett—The New York première of "Waiting for Beckett," a film about the Irish playwright, which includes footage of Beckett at work on a video production of his final play, "What Where." (D'Agostino Hall, New York University, 108 W. 3rd St. Feb. 23 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—Feb. 23 at 6:30: Fiction from the literary magazine *Story,* read by actors Jane Curtin, Dana Ivey, and Ted Marcoux. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 7:30: Seamus Heaney, the Irish poet, will read from his own poetry. (Schermerhorn Hall auditorium, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 7: Grace Paley and others will read from their own work. (Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 5 Union Sq. W. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 7:30: Ethan Canin will read from his collection of stories, "The Palace Thief." (Books & Co., 939 Madison Ave., at 74th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 7:30: David Greenberger will read from "Duplex Planet: Everybody's Asking Who I Was," excerpts from interviews with nursing-home residents. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 8: Eugene Stein will read from his novel, "Straitjacket & Tie." (A Different Light, 548 Hudson St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 1 at 7: Peter Carey, whose most recent book is "The Tax Inspector," will read from forthcoming work. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 1 at 8: Anne-christine d'Adesky, Edwidge Danticat, and Amy Wilentz will read from their work about Haiti. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799.)

Talks—Feb. 28 at 5:30: The PEN American Center is sponsoring two panels about the book business, with Virginia Barber, Phillip Lopate, and Mary Pope Osborne, among others. (McGraw-Hill auditorium, Sixth Ave. at 49th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 28 at 8: Roseanne Arnold will talk about her autobiography, "My Lives." (Congregation Rodeph Sholom, 7 W. 83rd St. For information about tickets, call 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 1 at 6: Yaffa Eliach will give a talk titled " 'Tower of Faces, Tower of Life': Reconstructing the Vanished Shtetl." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ March 1 at 8: The Guerrilla Girls, Gran Fury, and others will participate in a panel discussion, "Politically Engaged, *Politically* Enraged: Artists and Social Change." (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the discussion.)

Walks & Tours—Feb. 26 at 11: Eye on Art Tours will guide participants through SoHo's galleries. For more information, call 877-5117. . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 1: Big Onion Walking Tours says, "All aboard for Governors Island!" For more information, call 439-1090.

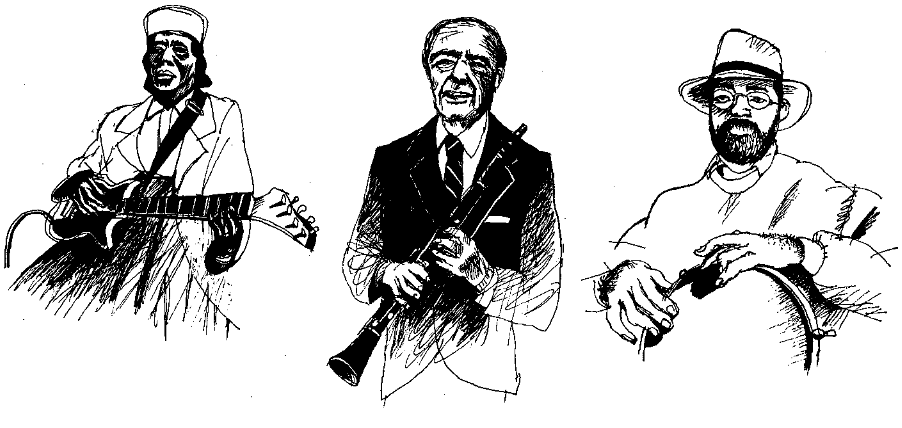
FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Rap Time—Tighten up your rhyme and rhythm skills in a colloquium (for ages six and older) on the history and practice of rap, led by members of the Interborough Repertory Theatre. (Brooklyn Historical Society, 128 Pierrepont St., Brooklyn. 1-718 624-0890. Feb. 23 at 2.)

Genealogy Workshop—Two graduate students from the Bank Street College of Education will help kids start exploring their family histories. Participants should bring a small family keepsake, such as a photograph. Recommended ages: eight to twelve. (Abigail Adams Smith Museum, 421 E. 61st St. 838-6878. Feb. 27, from 2 to 3:30.)

Puppet Shows—"The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin." (Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. 988-9093. Feb. 23-26 at noon and 3, and March 1 at 10:30 and noon. Through June 4.) . . . ¶ "The Al E. Gator Show," by the Puppet Company. (Metropolis Café, 31 Union Square W., at 16th St. Sundays at 1 and 3. For reservations, call 741-1646.)



Gospel singer and guitarist Lillie Mae Butler, clarinettist Sid Beckerman, and bomba player Juan Gutiérrez at the City Lore awards at Cooper Union.

EINAT PELED

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: A program of short films from "The 24th International Tournée of Animation."
Theatre 3: "The Cement Garden" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 24: "Faraway, So Close" (directed by Wim Wenders; in German). From Feb. 25: "Savage Nights" (Cyril Collard; in French).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).
Theatre 6: "Naked" (Mike Leigh).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Feb. 24: "Hallelujah!" (1929, King Vidor); "Cynara" (1932, Vidor); and "The Wedding Night" (1935, Vidor), with Anna Sten and Gary Cooper.
Feb. 25-27: "Hallelujah!"; "So Red the Rose" (1935, King Vidor), with Margaret Sullavan; and "Duel in the Sun" (1946, Vidor), with Jennifer Jones and Gregory Peck.
Feb. 28: Theatre closed.
March 1: "Hallelujah!"; "Show People" (1928, King Vidor), with Marion Davies; and "The Patsy" (1928, Vidor), with Davies.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 24: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams. From Feb. 25: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak), with Gary Oldman.

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 2: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal).
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "My Girl 2" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 24: "I'll Do Anything" (†). From Feb. 25: "Silent Tongue" (Sam Shepard).
Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin).
Theatre 7: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
"The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg" (Jerry Aronson), a documentary.

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).
Theatre 4: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 24: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright). From Feb. 25: "8 Seconds" (John G. Avildsen).
Theatre 6: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).
Theatre 7: "Fiorile" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak), with Gary Oldman.
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 3: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).
Theatre 4: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 5: "My Girl 2" (†).
Theatre 6: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "My Girl 2" (†).
Theatre 2: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).
Theatre 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 2: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"The Getaway" (†).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Feb. 24: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, in Mandarin).
From Feb. 25: "Belle Epoque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Body Snatchers" (Abel Ferrara).
Theatre 2: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (†).

THE MOVIES

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			23	24	25	26
27	28	1				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 35.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 24: "My Girl 2" (†). From Feb. 25: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).
Theatre 2: "The Getaway" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Intersection" (Mark Rydell), with Richard Gere.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi), with Stockard Channing, Will Smith, and Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 24: "I'll Do Anything" (†). From Feb. 25: "Midnight Cowboy" (1969, John Schlesinger), with Dustin Hoffman, Jon Voight, and Brenda Vaccaro.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 24: "Blink" (†). From Feb. 25: "8 Seconds" (John G. Avildsen).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Shadowlands" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 24: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac). From Feb. 25: "Silent Tongue" (Sam Shepard).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Naked" (Mike Leigh).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Shadowlands" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Getaway" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 24: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams. From Feb. 25: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal).
Theatre 5: "I'll Do Anything" (†).
Theatre 6: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin).
Theatre 7: "My Girl 2" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).
Theatre 2: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner), with Gérard Depardieu.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Women from the Lake of Scented Souls" (directed by Xie Fei; in Mandarin).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The War Room" (†).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "The Getaway" (†).
Theatre 2: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi), with Stockard Channing, Will Smith, and Donald Sutherland.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 2: "Shadowlands" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Paris, France" (Gerard Ciccoritti).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French), with Juliette Binoche.
Theatre 4: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, in Mandarin).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "I'll Do Anything" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 5: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Remains of the Day" (†).
Theatre 7: "The Getaway" (†).
Theatre 8: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 9: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams.
Theatre 3: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams.
Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).
Theatre 3: "Intersection" (Mark Rydell).
Theatre 4: "Farewell My Concubine" (Chen Kaige, in Mandarin).
Theatre 5: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein).
Theatre 6: "The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"I'll Do Anything" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Pelican Brief" (Alan J. Pakula).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi), with Stockard Channing, Will Smith, and Donald Sutherland.
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

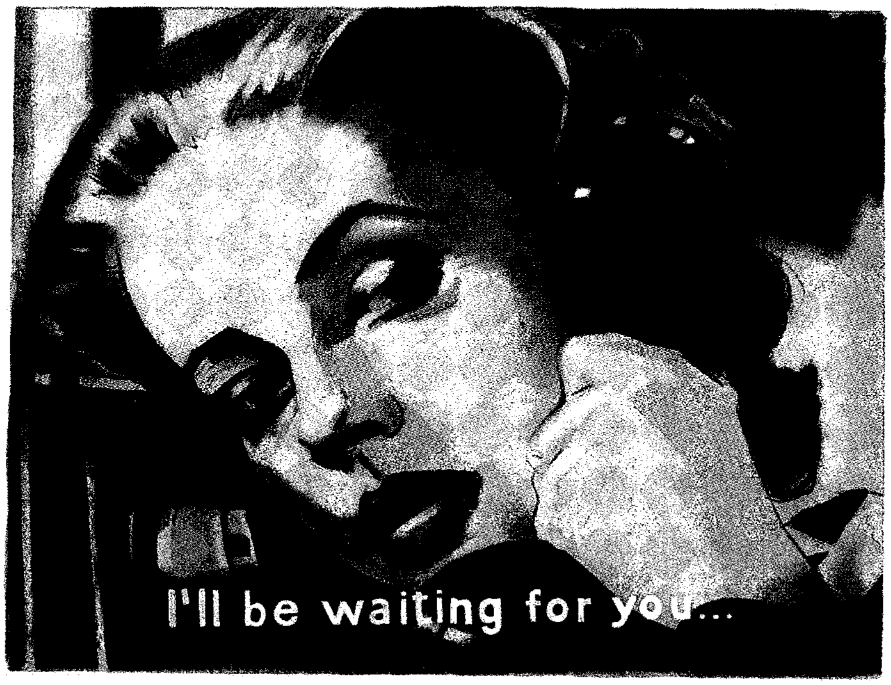
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
"The Wedding Banquet" (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Remains of the Day" (†).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese), with Daniel Day-Lewis, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Winona Ryder.

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"My Girl 2" (†).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).


I'll be waiting for you...

At MOMA, Jeanne Moreau in "Elevator to the Gallows."

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Fiorile" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (†).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (Krzysztof Kieslowski; in French), with Juliette Binoche.
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (Stephen Frears).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 24: "The Accompanist" (Claude Miller; in French). From Feb. 25: "Belle Epoque" (Fernando Trueba; in Spanish).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 2: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 3: "Blue Chips" (William Friedkin).
Theatre 4: "Blink" (†).
Theatre 5: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal).
Theatre 6: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 24: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (Chris Columbus), with Robin Williams. From Feb. 25: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).
Theatre 2: "The Getaway" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (directed by Tom Shadyac), with Jim Carrey.
Theatre 2: "The Fugitive" (Andrew Davis), with Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones.
Theatre 3: "Reality Bites" (Ben Stiller).
Theatre 4: "On Deadly Ground" (Steven Seagal).
Theatre 5: "On Deadly Ground."
Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 7: "Blink" (†).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"Blank Check" (Rupert Wainwright).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "My Girl 2" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 3: "Tombstone" (George Cosmatos).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Blue Chips" (William Friedkin), with Nick Nolte.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "The Getaway" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 24: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian). From Feb. 25: "Sugar Hill" (Leon Ichaso).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Feb. 24: "The Keyhole" (1933, directed by Michael Curtiz), with Kay Francis, George Brent, and Ruth Donnelly; "Private Detective 62" (1933, Curtiz), with William Powell, Margaret Lindsay, and Donnelly; and "Easy to Love" (1934, William Keighley), with Adolphe Menjou and Mary Astor.
Feb. 25-26: "Blessed Event" (1932, Roy Del Ruth), with Lee Tracy and Dick Powell; and "The Strange Love of Molly Louvain" (1932, Michael Curtiz), with Ann Dvorak, Leslie Fenton, Richard Cromwell, and Tracy.
Feb. 27: "Jewel Robbery" (1932, William Dieterle), with William Powell and Kay Francis; and "One Way Passage" (1932, Tay Garnett), with Powell, Francis, and Aline MacMahon.
Feb. 28: Two early films by Yasujiro Ozu: "An Inn in Toyko" (1935) and "That Night's Wife" (1930).
March 1: "The Public Enemy" (†); and "Hard to Handle" (1933, Mervyn LeRoy), with James Cagney and Mary Brian.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 23: "A Slight Case of Murder" (1938, Lloyd Bacon), with Edward G. Robinson, Allen Jenkins, and Jane Bryan; and "Arsenic and Old Lace" (1944, Frank Capra), with Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre, Josephine Hull, and Jean Adair.
Feb. 24: "La Grande Illusion" (1937, Jean Renoir; in French), with Erich von Stroheim, Jean Gabin, Pierre Fresnay, and Marcel Dalio; and "La Bête Humaine" (1938, Renoir; in French), with Gabin, Simone Simon, Carette, Fernand Ledoux, Blanchette Brunoy, and Renoir himself.
Feb. 25-26: "Hannah and Her Sisters" (1986, Woody Allen) and "Radio Days" (1987, Allen).
Feb. 27: "Children of Paradise" (1945, Marcel Carné; in French), with Jean-Louis Barrault, Arletty, Pierre Brasseur, Louis Salou, Marcel Herrand, Pierre Renoir, and Maria Casarès.
Feb. 28: "Au Hasard, Balthazar" (1966, Robert Bresson; in French) and "Mouchette" (1966, Bresson; in French).
March 1: "Psycho" (†); and "The Birds" (1963, Alfred Hitchcock), with Rod Taylor, Jessica Tandy, Suzanne Pleshette, and Tippi Hedren.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films produced by Gaumont, the French movie studio. Feb. 24 at 2:30: "Three Make a Pair" (1957, directed by Sacha Guitry). . . . Feb. 24 at 6: "Poison" (1951, Guitry). . . . Feb. 24 at 8: "Murders and Thieves" (1957, Guitry). . . . ¶ A program of films starring Jeanne Moreau. Feb. 25 at 2:30 and Feb. 27 at 5: "Touchez pas au Grisbi" (1953, Jacques Becker; in French). . . . Feb. 25 at 6 and Feb. 27 at 12:30: "The Diary of a Chambermaid" (1964, Luis Buñuel; in French). . . . Feb. 25 at 8 and Feb. 27 at 2:45: "The Old Lady Who Wades in the Sea" (1991, Laurent Heynemann; in French). . . . Feb. 26 at 12:30 and March 1 at 6: "Elevator to the Gallows" ("Frantic"; 1957, Louis Malle; in French). . . . Feb. 26 at 2:45: "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" (1959, Roger Vadim; in French). . . . Feb. 26 at 5 and Feb. 28 at 2:30: "Chimes at Midnight" ("Falstaff"; 1967, Orson Welles). . . . Feb. 28 at 6: "Back to the Wall" (1957, Edouard Molinaro; in French). . . . March 1 at 2: "Moderato Cantabile" (1960, Peter Brook). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 3 and 6: "The Train of Happiness" (1993, Mikhail Bogin), a documentary. . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 3 and 6 and Feb. 26-27 at 2 and 5: Academy Award-nominated documentary feature films.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—French films, selected by editors and critics at *Cahiers du Cinéma.* Feb. 23 at 2 and 6:15: "From the East" (1993, Chantal Akerman). . . . Feb. 23 at 4: "Boy Meets Girl" (1984, Léos Carax). . . . Feb. 23 at 8:30 and Feb. 25 at 4 and 8:15: "Bad Blood" (†). . . . Feb. 24 at 2 and Feb. 27 at 6: "Le Grand Bonheur" (1993, Hervé Le Roux). . . . Feb. 24 at 6 and Feb. 25 at 2 and 6:15: "François Truffaut: Stolen Portraits" (1993, Serge Toubiana and Michel Pascal). . . . Feb. 26 at 4 and 8:30 and Feb. 27 at 4: "The Birth of Love" (1993, Philippe Garrel). . . . Feb. 26 at 6, Feb. 28 at 4:15 and 9, and March 1 at 2: "Les Amants du Pont Neuf" (1991, Carax). . . . Feb. 28 at 2 and 6:45 and March 1 at 4:30: "The Eye of Vichy" (1993, Claude Chabrol). . . . ¶ Feb. 24 at 8:30: "The Secret Life of Houses" (1993, Adrian Velicescu). . . . ¶ Feb. 26-27 at 2: "A Day at the Races" (1937, Sam Wood), with the Marx Brothers.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films by Steven Spielberg. Through Feb. 25 at 2: "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" (1982), with Henry Thomas. . . . Feb. 26 at 1:30: "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 4: A program of independent and experimental films. . . . ¶ Films by Oscar Micheaux. Feb. 27 at 2: "Ten Minutes to Live" (1932). . . . Feb. 27 at 4:30: "Lying Lips" (1939).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 23 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "La Lectrice" (1989, Michel Deville; in French), with Miou-Miou.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—"*Pacific Reflections: How Japan and America See Each Other in Film.*" Feb. 25 at 6:30: "Gung Ho" (†).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Feb. 23 at 7 and 9: "An American Dream" (1987, Janet Forman). . . . ¶ Feb. 25 at 7 and 8: "The River" (1928, Frank Borzage). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 2: "Lester Horto: Genius on the Wrong Coast" (1993, Lelia Goldoni). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 4: "Ivan the Terrible, Parts I and II" (1944-46, Sergei Eisenstein; in Russian). . . . ¶ Feb. 26 at 8 and 10: "Pull My Daisy" (1959, Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie); and "Shadows" (1961, John Cassavetes). . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 7: "Othello" (1952, Orson Welles). . . . ¶ Feb. 27 at 9: "Good News" (1947, Charles Walters), with June Allyson and Peter Lawford. . . . ¶ March 1 at 5: "Bukowski" (1971, Taylor Hackford). . . . ¶ March 1 at 6: "The Bukowski Tapes" (1988, Barbet Schroeder). . . . ¶ March 1 at 8: "Barfly" (1987, Schroeder), with Mickey Rourke.

JULIAN ALLEN

MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Belle Epoque—A lyrical comedy, set in the early thirties, about a young Spanish Army deserter who seeks refuge in the household of an old painter and his four beautiful daughters. Directed by Fernando Trueba. In Spanish. Opening February 25.

8 Seconds—A drama based on the life and times of the champion rodeo bull rider Lane Frost. Luke Perry stars as Frost. Also with Stephen Baldwin and Cynthia Geary. Directed by John G. Avildsen. Opening February 25.

Savage Nights—Cyril Collard wrote, directed, and stars in this adaption of his novel about unsafe sex and Parisian life on the wild side. With Romane Bohringer, Carlos López, and Maria Schneider. In French. Opening February 25.

Silent Tongue—A frontier drama, set in the Southwest in the eighteen-seventies, about whites and Kiowa Indians. Sam Shepard wrote the screenplay and directed. With Richard Harris, Alan Bates, Dermot Mulroney, and River Phoenix. Opening February 25.

Sugar Hill—Wesley Snipes and Michael Wright star as drug-dealing brothers in Harlem. With Theresa Randle and Clarence Williams III. Directed by Leon Ichaso. Opening February 25.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Blink—Emma Brody (Madeleine Stowe), who plays fiddle in a Chicago band, is sharp, independent, and sexually wise; she is also blind, which in movie code means "vulnerable." And so, after a funny and suggestive start, Michael Apted's thriller slowly goes about its business of turning her into a victim. Emma has her vision restored in an operation, and is immediately rewarded with the sight of a murder suspect. With the villain on her trail, a cop named Hallstrom (Aidan Quinn) is assigned to protect her, a standard setup for falling in love. "Blink" is a dud romance, and it feels pretty ordinary as a thriller—the time is right, surely, for a moratorium on serial killers. Nevertheless, the movie remains in touch with fascinating feelings: the blind Emma has a kind of enclosed strength that seems to leak away as she adjusts to the visible world. It should have been an ideal part for Stowe, who is gathering pace with every film; add this one to "Short Cuts" and "Last of the Mohicans," and you sense a woman swaying between a full heart and a controlling wit. But Apted never gives her the space she needs; only in a few scenes, aided by the smart and reliable Laurie Metcalf, does she really open our eyes.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/14/94.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Cinema II; through Feb. 24.)

The Cement Garden—In the most horrible house in England, a concrete cube in a rusty, sweltering wasteland, the miserable teenage Jack (Andrew Robertson) occasionally takes time off from masturbation to look after his ailing mother (Sinead Cusack). When she dies, he and his sister (Charlotte Gainsbourg) cover her in concrete and stash her in the cellar. Still to come: cross-dressing, poor personal hygiene, and a fistful of incest. Ian McEwan has adapted his own novel—still his most vicious and compact—and hardly changed a word, but the spirit has gone out of it. The director, Andrew Birkin, gives no energy to the dereliction, no kick of horror; the movie is drab and deadly from the first scene. It's solemn, controlled, and oddly unshocking; the one big surprise is Gainsbourg's flawless British accent.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center.)

Fiorile—The new movie by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani is a family saga that, according to the filmmakers, is based on legends they heard while they were growing up in Tuscany. The picture, spanning two hundred years, tells the story of the Benedettis (who are sometimes referred to by the locals as the Maledettis). The Benedettis begin as peasants and become wealthy landowners, but their prosperity and power derive from an original sin, committed in the seventeen-nineties, for which future generations have never received full absolution. The screenplay, by the Tavianis and Sandro Petraglia, is constructed as a series of historical tales framed by a contemporary story in which members of the three surviving generations of the Benedettis illustrate, in various ways, the consequences of their blighted family history. Although the movie is elegantly made and has moments of great beauty, it somehow falls short of delivering the tremendous emotional impact that it promises. The three legends we're told about the family aren't extraordinary in themselves, and the thematic structure—the whole saga comes down to a parable about love versus greed—is disappointingly banal. In Italian.—T.R. (2/7/94) (Village East Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Getaway—Roger Donaldson's remake of the 1972 Sam Peckinpah movie, which starred Steve McQueen and Ali MacGraw as husband-and-wife criminals on the lam, is so smoothly efficient that it makes the original's slickness and crassness look touchingly primitive. What's infuriating about the new movie is that Donaldson and his screenwriters, Walter Hill and Amy Jones, don't make the slightest effort to find a fresh perspective on the material. Alec Baldwin is very skillful, but this remake is so unmistakably still a Steve McQueen picture that he looks at times as if he had been superimposed on the film by some computer trickery in the editing room. (And Kim Basinger, too, is hampered by the script's fidelity to the 1972 movie.) The original was a big hit, and the filmmakers aren't about to mess with a proven commodity. Donaldson's version is craftsmanlike yet smug: it makes you feel nostalgia for the less pristine crumminess of bygone trash.—T.R. (2/21/94) (34th St. East, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin.)

I'll Do Anything—With Nick Nolte, Albert Brooks, Julie Kavner, Joely Richardson, and Whittni Wright; directed by James L. Brooks. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Ziegfeld. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII, and Coronet; through Feb. 24.)

In the Name of the Father—Jim Sheridan's ragged, fascinating new movie is based on the autobiography of Gerry Conlon, a Belfast Catholic who spent nearly fifteen years in British prisons for a crime he didn't commit. Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis) and three friends were accused of participating in the 1974 bombing of a pub near London, in which five people were killed; the only evidence against Conlon was his own confession, extracted from him by means of a brutal police interrogation. When Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, try to function as historians, the movie feels shaky. But when Gerry and his father (Pete Postlethwaite)—who has been convicted on a different charge—get to prison, the filmmakers begin to explore their real theme, which is the intimate emotional consequences of oppression and prejudice. With Emma Thompson, Don Baker, and Corin Redgrave.—T.R. (1/24/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

My Girl 2—Topic: "Young adult" movies are neither young nor adult. (Talk amongst yourselves.) In this one, the road to self-knowledge contains wide paved shoulders, blatant sign-

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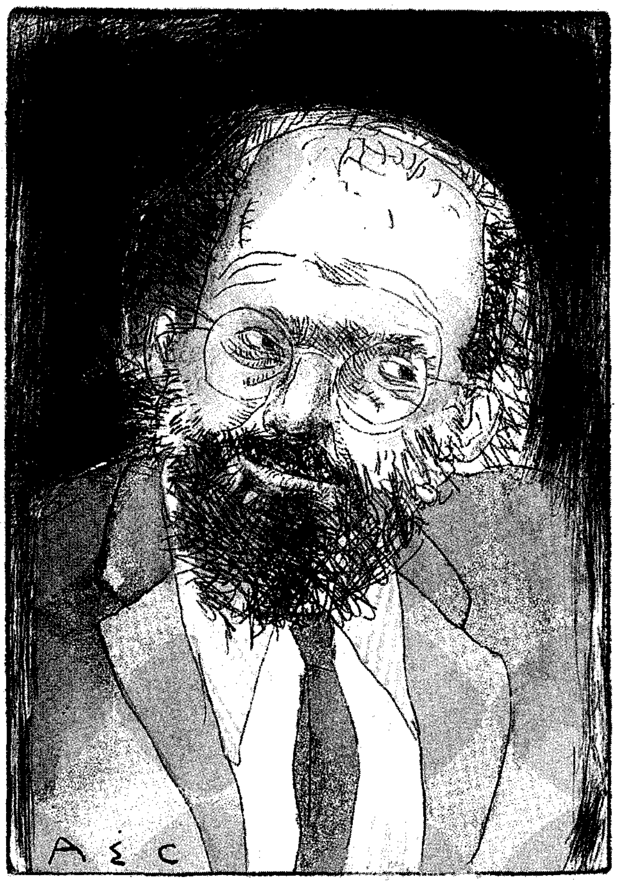
posts, and only a few minor bumps and detours; it makes the original “My Girl” look like “The Member of the Wedding.” The sequel is set in 1974, when the offbeat heroine, Vada Sultenfuss (Anna Chlumsky), is thirteen—old enough to leave her mortician father (Dan Aykroyd) and his second wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) for a brief trip from Pennsylvania to L.A. in search of stories about her mother, who died bearing Vada. She stays with Uncle Phil (Richard Masur), his employer-lover Rose (Christine Ebersole), and Rose’s son Nick (Austin O’Brien) long enough to cast her spell on the boy and to see the grownups get properly engaged. Naturally, she discovers that Mom was a true individualist. The cast is appealing, but the screenwriter, Janet Kovalcik (“Married to It”), displays her unerring knack for stranding the audience in a limbo between humor and domestic pathos, while Howard Zieff (who did “My Girl”) directs as if energy would detract from the valuable lessons.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Columbus Circle, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Manhattan Twin; through Feb. 24.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there’s a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beaches and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It’s almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Remains of the Day—Anthony Hopkins plays Stevens, a butler who has given long and faithful service at Darlington Hall and maintained his emotional temperature at absolute zero. This has cost him dearly: first, he failed to see that his master (James Fox) was dangerously bent on appeasement with the Germans in the nineteen-thirties; and, second, he refused to accept, or even acknowledge, the love offered to him by the housekeeper (Emma Thompson). Adapted by Ruth Prawer Jhabvala from the novel by Kazuo Ishiguro, this Merchant-Ivory production strains so hard to portray dignified restraint that it almost seizes up with good manners. This is especially unfair to Thompson, who is forced to smother her naturally high spirits.—A.L. (11/15/93) (Village Theatre VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Paris.)

The Scent of Green Papaya—Vietnam’s first Academy Award nominee for best foreign film offers an easy-to-resist blend of indoor nature chronicle (it could be subtitled “The Insects and Reptiles of Saigon”) and bittersweet remembrance. The writer-director, Tran Anh Hung, has a visual idea or two; in prolonged, gliding tracking shots he traces the progress of a provincial girl named Mui, who works for a deceptively comfortable Saigon family and then for an eligible composer. When the camera skates through homes as neat and geometric as dioramas, it makes viewers feel as if they were on a moving sidewalk at a World’s Fair exhibition about South Vietnam before the fall. The result is a kind of 3-D calligraphy rather than dramatic moviemaking. Lu Man San plays Mui at age ten; Tran Nu Yên-Khê plays her at twenty. Cinematography by Benoît Delhomme. In Vietnamese.—M.S. (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



At Cinema Village, Jerry Aronson’s “The Life and Times of Allen Ginsberg.”

ALAN E. COBER

Schindler’s List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg’s film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn’t seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist’s heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn’t shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e. nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. Along with Neeson, who is brilliant, the standouts in the large cast are Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz. The wonderfully expressive black-and-white cinematography is by Janusz Kaminski.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Shadowlands—Richard Attenborough’s film chronicles the relationship between the British writer C. S. Lewis (played by Anthony Hopkins) and an American woman named Joy Davidman Gresham (Debra Winger). The screenplay, by William Nicholson (adapted from his earlier television and stage versions of the story), initially emphasizes the comic incongruity of the love affair: Lewis, a shy and scholarly bachelor in his fifties, suddenly falls hard for a blunt, outspoken woman who doesn’t quite fit the profile of an Oxford professor’s wife. But the real drama is in the poignant brevity of the relationship, which is cut short by Joy’s death from cancer. The picture isn’t actually very good; it’s just a tearjerker with clumsy interpolations of theology. (Lewis, a prominent Christian thinker, is shown delivering lectures on the spiritual implications of happiness and pain.) Hopkins and Winger are fascinating to watch, though. Winger—who is, as always, vivid, honest, and intuitive—gives the whole idea of Americanness an astonishing radiance. And Hopkins, realizing that he has to put up some real emotional capital or else get blown off the screen, comes through with the most impassioned acting of his career.—T.R. (Beekman, East 85th Street, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Metro Cinema.)

The War Room—The somewhat deranged charm of James Carville, the chief strategist of Bill Clinton’s Presidential campaign, dominates D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus’s exhilarating documentary. The film does justice to the sheer reckless pleasure of electoral gamesmanship. And Carville is the largest, most resonant character in recent American movies, someone whose work is such a complete expression of his personality that you can’t help laughing: the unity of this life and this art seems too good to be true.—T.R. (11/8/93) (Film Forum.)

The Wedding Banquet—Except for the title celebration itself—a ritualized mob scene that gets weirder and funnier as it goes on—this cross-cultural, cross-sexual comedy-drama, set in New York City, is just a wan getting-to-know-you fable for alternative families. Ang Lee’s film centers on the marital subterfuge of a successful gay Taiwanese immigrant (Winston Chao): despite having a longtime companion (Mitchell Lichtenstein), he weds a struggling artist (May Chin) from mainland China to satisfy his traditional parents, who come from Taiwan for an extended visit as soon as they learn he’s engaged. Chao and Lichtenstein are likable, but Chin, as the confused, desirous bride, and Sihung Lung and Ah-Leh Gua, as the dignified, well-meaning father and mother, are the ones who deserve cheers.—M.S. (Angelika 57.)

What’s Eating Gilbert Grape—The small-town setting is Endora, Iowa; the hero (Johnny Depp) is a grocery clerk who can’t endure it. He and his two sisters (Laura Harrington and Mary Kate Schellhardt) are stuck there while they take care of a morbidly obese mother who won’t leave the house (Darlene Cates) and a mentally challenged brother named Arnie (Leonardo DiCaprio). The director, Lasse Hallström, aims for a tragicomic fable that says a rut is as deep as you make it; he tries to be sensitive without being boring. But the film is still implicitly condescending since almost all the characters (including the afflicted ones) function as tests of Gilbert's patience. John C. Reilly and Crispin Glover (as Gilbert's buddies) contribute affable comic turns, but the exuberant, inventive DiCaprio is the only one who transcends the flatness of the storytelling.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, and Plaza.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Bad Blood ("Mauvais Sang," 1987)—The kind of French canvas you'd like to spray graffiti on if the director hadn't beaten everyone to it. Léos Carax smothers everything in an inscrutable, self-indulgent mix of spiffy graphics, whimsy, and high trauma. The hero, a cardsharp and thief played by Denis Lavant, advises a jilted girlfriend to "make love with boys and men"—but "always with a condom." Carax doesn't refer directly to AIDS in this fantasy melodrama: the disease that's going around here is a retrovirus that's apparently spread when people have sex with partners they don't love. Lavant teams up with his dead father's partner in crime (Michel Piccoli) to steal the serum that defeats it. No one registers in this piece of trash-with-flash—not Lavant, not Piccoli, and not even Juliette Binoche as the prize moll of their otherworldly underworld. In French.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Feb. 23 and 25.)

Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977)—This celebration of the wonders up there in the skies is the best humored of all technological-marvel fantasies. It has visionary magic and a childlike comic spirit, along with a love of surprises and a skeptical, let's-try-it-on spirit. It sends you out in a state of blissful satisfaction. Written and directed by Steven Spielberg.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Feb. 26.)

Gung Ho (1986)—Michael Keaton plays the foreman of a closed auto plant in Pennsylvania who persuades a Japanese motor company to reopen it. The Assan Motors executive in charge (Gedde Watanabe) hopes to raise productivity by instilling American workers with Japanese discipline and corporate pride; behind his back, Keaton assures the rank and file that business will go on as usual. Although the director, Ron Howard, and his writers, Edwin Blum, Lowell Ganz, and Babaloo Mandel, strive to follow an open-trade policy of satire, they resort to duelling caricatures of hang-loose Yankees vs. uptight Asians. But Keaton is perfect as a con man who makes a sucker out of everyone, himself included. And Watanabe has a gift for explosive silliness. His bout of helpless, drunken laughter is the funniest bit in the movie. With George Wendt.—M.S. (Japan Society; Feb. 25.)

Psycho (1960)—When he directed this amazingly effective low-budget thriller in black-and-white with a TV-tested crew, Alfred Hitchcock went after the youthful horror-film audience with a vengeance. Everything from the titillating opening of Janet Leigh and John Gavin getting dressed after making love during her lunch hour to the notorious slashing shocks and reversals made the film a rite-of-passage smash. Written by Joseph Stefano from a novel by Robert Bloch, it's a nightmare crystallization of the petit-bourgeois side of Hitchcock's sensibility. No improper thought goes unpunished. All the characters are trapped in stifling circumstances—especially poor Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins), the manager of a motel stranded beside a no-longer-travelled road. With Vera Miles, Martin Balsam, and Simon Oakland as the psychiatrist who unloads the explanations.—M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; March 1.)

The Public Enemy (1931)—William Wellman's gangster classic, with James Cagney, Jean Harlow, Joan Blondell, and Mae Clarke as the girl who gets the grapefruit shoved in her kisser. A good picture, even if the theme music *is* "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles."—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 1.)

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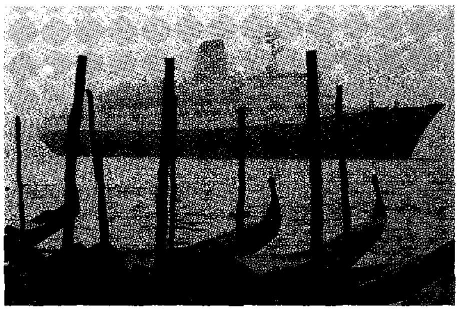

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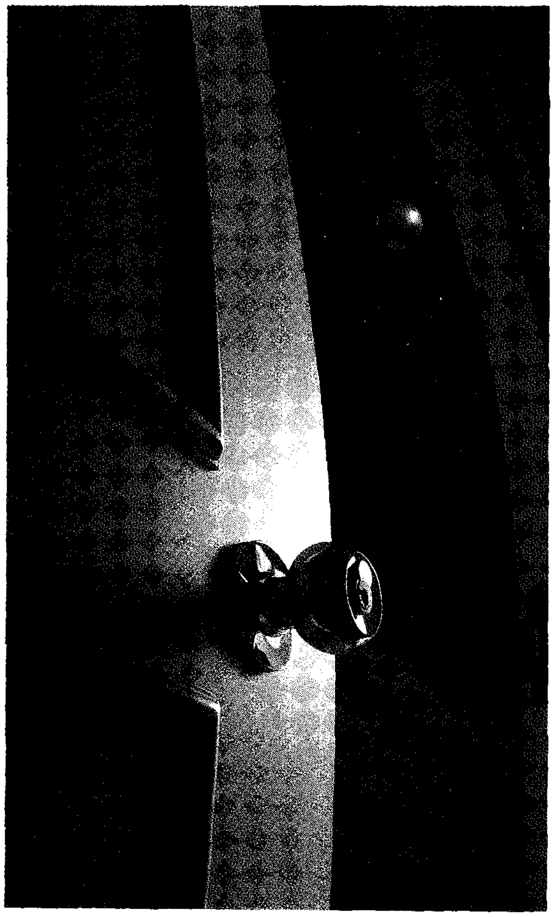

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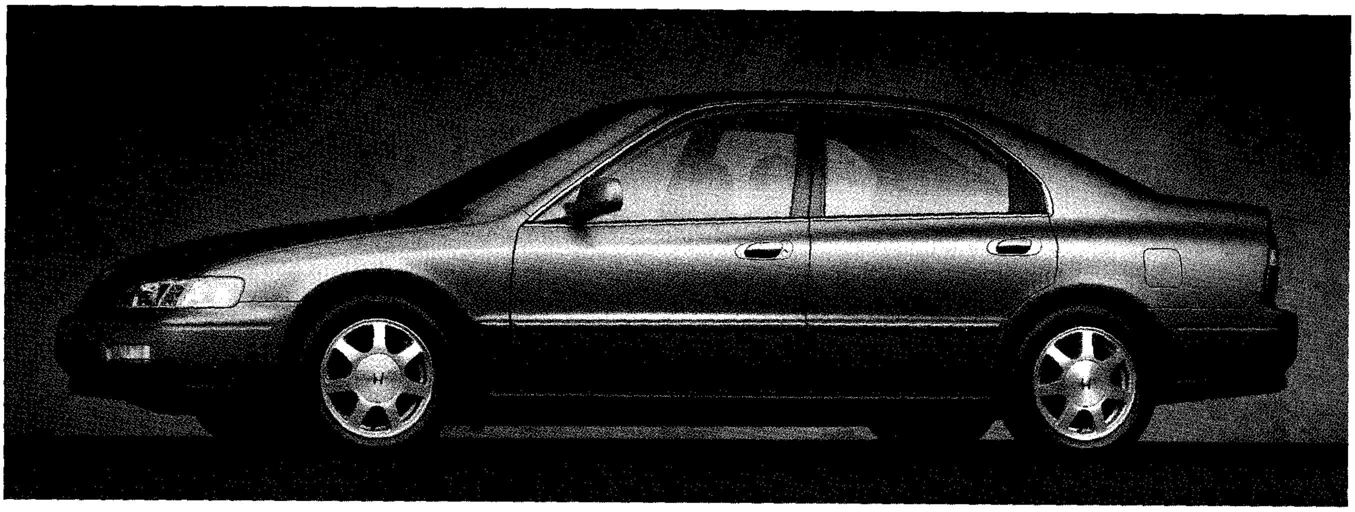

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You'll notice that the driver's and front passenger's airbags SRS are standard. The Accord EX, pictured here, features a refined anti-lock braking system.

While we're on the subject of safety, the Accord meets federal side-impact standards for 1997–three years early.

Its 2.2 liter, 16-valve engine will be a topic of engineering lectures for years to come. A new version of the Honda-designed Variable Valve Timing and Lift Electronic Control system (VTEC) in the Accord EX increases its power output to 145 horsepower, as well as improves its fuel efficiency.

Computer analysis and testing revealed how high-tech sound-absorbing materials and changes in the body's internal structure could reduce vibration and noise even more.

Study the interior of the new Accord and you will find that it's expanded in four dimensions: length, width, height–and style. The look is warm and inviting, with soft luxurious fabrics and pleasing textures. A rich, leather-trimmed interior is available on the Accord EX.

The seats are wider and offer greater support in the hip, back and shoulder areas. A padded center armrest with storage bin is ideally positioned for driver or passenger comfort.

The new instrument panel is a model of intelligent planning and design. Gauges are large and easy to read. Controls operate with a satisfying precision.

Honda engineers wrote the book on ride and handling. The Accord adds another chapter. Its sophisticated 4-wheel double wishbone suspension expertly absorbs bumps, tracks accurately through curves and responds immediately to steering inputs.

The Accord has a history of sending everybody else back to their drawing boards. With the introduction of the new Accord, history is bound to repeat itself.

A Car Ahead
HONDA

© 1993 American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

MAKING THE FUR FIGHT FLY

Dan Mathews can clear out a department store's fur salon—well, not in less time than it takes a steel-jaw trap to close on the leg of a furry little fox, but pretty fast. One afternoon last week, in the fur salon on the second floor of Bergdorf Goodman, where the coats were mostly mink, and the customers were four and female, a saleswoman approached him warily. In vinyl Doc Martens boots and a polyester blazer, and carrying a backpack, Mathews, who stands six feet five, and who, at twenty-nine, is the director of international campaigns for the animal-rights group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), didn't look like someone about to buy a fur.

"May I help you?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied, politely. "I'm here to look at furs." Pointing to a coat near her, he asked, "That's a chinchilla, right?"

"Yes," the saleswoman responded.

"Do you know how they kill the animals to make that coat?" he asked.

"They're gassed," she answered.

"Actually," he said, pouncing, "they're killed by genital electrocution."

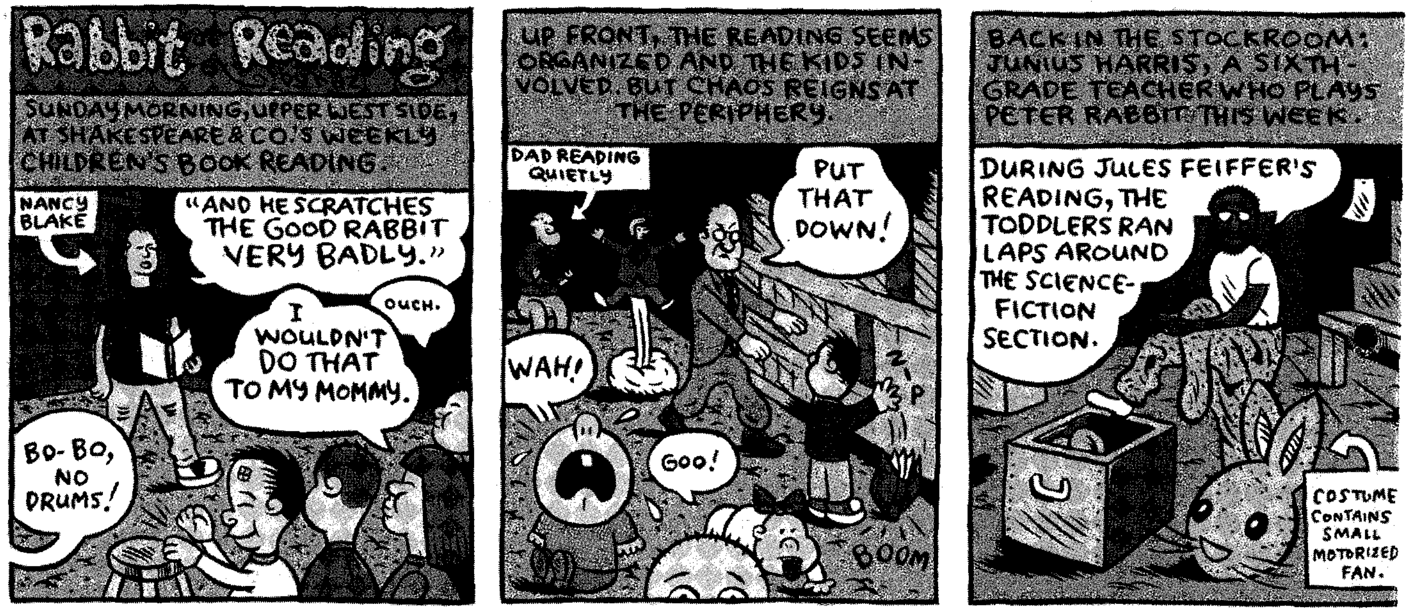
The saleswoman looked aghast. "I'm calling security," she announced, hurrying to a phone. The shoppers headed out. Mr. Mathews left, too, and headed downstairs. On the main floor, before leaving the store, he surreptitiously approached a woman in a full-length fur and pressed an "I'm an asshole. I wear fur" sticker on the back of her coat.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EINAT PELED

During this cold and stormy winter, the fight against furs has heated up in the city, and the main reason is not the weather but a heightening of PETA's role in the battle. Most notably, or maybe notoriously, the group has launched a kind of unarmed guerrilla war against designers who make furs. Earlier this month, the group scored a big victory when Calvin Klein announced that he would no longer use fur in his collections. Mr. Klein claims that he made the decision last November, but Mr. Mathews believes he made it sometime after January 25th, the day that members of PETA, accompanied by members of the media, stormed the designer's offices.

In eight years with PETA, Mr. Mathews has got very good at planning these raids, and over lunch at the Zen Palate before the visit to Bergdorf's he had discussed his tactics. First, he chooses his target. Calvin Klein was an obvious choice, he said, because Klein's so famous. Next, a few days before the event, he cases the designer's office. Mr. Mathews used to model, and he has no problem getting into Seventh Avenue showrooms, but, just to be sure, he said, he smiles at the security guards on his way in and out. On the day before the raid, he alerts the media. On January 24th, when he contacted newspapers and wire services and local television news departments, he wouldn't say which designer he was targeting, but he did advise any interested reporter to meet him on the corner of Thirty-ninth Street and Eighth Avenue. Recalling, no doubt, how PETA members had in the past interrupted fashion shows, dragged thousand-dollar fur coats through the streets, and paraded down Fifth Avenue in their underwear, many reporters took the advice.

On the morning of January 25th, in the lobby of the building on West Thirty-ninth Street where Calvin Klein, Inc., has its offices, PETA members and reporters mingled, then split into two groups. By the time building security realized what was going on, the groups were in separate elevators, heading up to Mr. Klein's offices, on the tenth floor. Security managed to stop one of the cars: Fox News, New York 1, and Univision didn't make it. Mr. Mathews' group, which included reporters from the Associated Press and the *News*, did. In the reception


Rabbit Reading
SUNDAY MORNING, UPPER WEST SIDE, AT SHAKESPEARE & CO.'S WEEKLY CHILDREN'S BOOK READING.
NANCY BLAKE
"AND HE SCRATCHES THE GOOD RABBIT VERY BADLY."
OUCH.
I WOULDN'T DO THAT TO MY MOMMY.
BO-BO, NO DRUMS!
UP FRONT, THE READING SEEMS ORGANIZED AND THE KIDS INVOLVED. BUT CHAOS REIGNS AT THE PERIPHERY.
DAD READING QUIETLY
PUT THAT DOWN!
WAH!
Z P
GOO!
BOOM
BACK IN THE STOCKROOM: JUNIUS HARRIS, A SIXTH-GRADE TEACHER WHO PLAYS PETER RABBIT THIS WEEK.
DURING JULES FEIFFER'S READING, THE TODDLERS RAN LAPS AROUND THE SCIENCE-FICTION SECTION.
COSTUME CONTAINS SMALL MOTORIZED FAN.

area, PETA activists spray-painted "Kills Animals" under the Calvin Klein name, then roamed the halls with a bullhorn shouting "Fur shame!" Half an hour later, the police arrived and arrested eight of the protesters. By then, Mr. Mathews was gone.

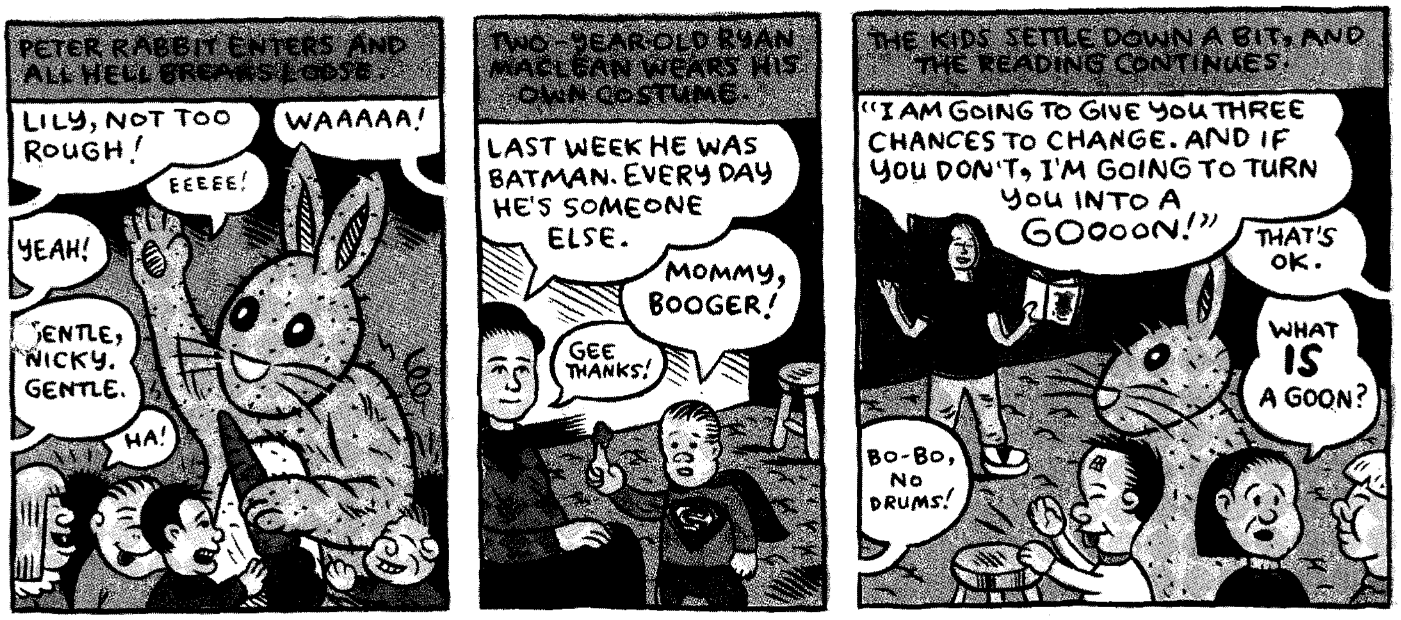
At lunch, Mr. Mathews talked about how he catches cockroaches and releases them outdoors, and how he doesn't eat meat, and how he doesn't wear wool or silk. He also talked about how, the evening before, there had been a small dinner party at the St. Regis hosted by Kim Basinger and her husband, Alec Baldwin—both are animal-rights activists—at which the guests had got a glimpse of PETA's newest anti-fur ad. It has as its message "Beauty Is Not About Wearing Someone Else's Coat," and it features Ms. Basinger, wearing no fur, and no anything. Everybody at the dinner ate tempeh scallopini, and no one complained about the after-dinner screening of a film of animals being trapped, beaten, strangled, gassed, and drowned.

HOMELESSNESS REVISITED

ANDREW CUOMO came to town from Washington one recent bone-chilling morning, and in the course of his daylong stay he managed to sound a lot like his father, the Governor—particularly in his Queens inflections—and also a lot like a New Democrat, particularly on the issue of homelessness, for which, as Assistant Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, he is the Clinton Administration's chief shaper of policy. At times, he managed to sound Cuomo-esque and New Democratic at the same time; for instance, upon being asked what had informed his thinking about homelessness, he replied, "My opinion is based on seven years of service in the South Bronx and Bedford-Stuyvesant, being there even at two o'clock in the morning. I think when you take away the political diatribes and the litmus tests—'Are you sensitive or are you uncaring?,' 'Are you a civil libertarian or are you a Neanderthal?'—once you remove all that baloney, the solution is apparent."

The policy gridlock on homelessness between conservatives (the homeless are responsible for their own plight) and liberals (the homeless are the victims of Republican housing policies) seems to be loosening. And Cuomo has played a critical part in this process. In 1992, he delivered to Mayor David Dinkins a report criticizing the city's homeless policies. The report declared that what the homeless needed was not only shelter but a "continuum of care"—a range of services (educational, vocational, medical) best provided not by city agencies but by private, non-profit groups. The Mayor had commissioned the report, but largely ignored the advice. Andrew Cuomo, however, has had the last—or, at least, the latest—word. Cuomo was the principal author of the Clinton Administration's new plan to end homelessness, a draft of which the *Times* obtained and published a front-page story about last week. The plan calls for unprecedented spending on behalf of the homeless, and for many of the reforms that Cuomo has long spoken of.

In order to show his principles at work, Cuomo, along with Tipper Gore, wife of Vice-President Al Gore, visited the South Bronx to tour a "transitional" housing facility—a newly constructed low-rise complex on 171st Street built by Project HELP, a non-profit group that Cuomo himself founded in 1986, and which today is the nation's largest private provider of housing for the homeless. Tipper Gore, radiating warmth in a red pants suit, beamed and hugged her way through the site; Cuomo, deferring to rank, stood aside, his arms crossed. Occasionally, he asked HELP staffers searching, professional questions that it seemed, judging from his peremptory nods, he already knew the answers to. In any event, it was clear that HELP Bronx, as the facility is called, was an unusually well-designed and clean and orderly place, with apartments ranged around a courtyard and a jolly-looking playground. HELP Bronx, which offers its residents education, "job-readiness" training, and primary medical care, embodies the "continuum" principle. It also incorporates the notion of "rights and responsibilities," which has become central for Cuomo and a whole generation of Democrats: tenants are required to sign a contract pledging to keep their unit neat, to meet regularly with their


PETER RABBIT ENTERS AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.
LILY, NOT TOO ROUGH!
WAAAAA!
EEEEE!
YEAH!
GENTLE, NICKY. GENTLE.
HA!
TWO-YEAR-OLD RYAN MACLEAN WEARS HIS OWN COSTUME.
LAST WEEK HE WAS BATMAN. EVERY DAY HE'S SOMEONE ELSE.
MOMMY, BOOGER!
GEE THANKS!
THE KIDS SETTLE DOWN A BIT, AND THE READING CONTINUES:
"I AM GOING TO GIVE YOU THREE CHANCES TO CHANGE. AND IF YOU DON'T, I'M GOING TO TURN YOU INTO A GOOooON!"
THAT'S OK.
WHAT IS A GOON?
BO-BO, NO DRUMS!

caseworker, to attend classes and training, to observe a curfew, and so on.

On the ride back to Manhattan, Cuomo seemed to take up most of the space in the van: he's a tall and burly thirty-six-year-old, with a strong jaw and his father's very dark eyes, and he has the sort of pugnacious yet intimate New York style that one associates with an older generation—equal parts fist shaking and arm gripping. Upon being asked to explain what he had concluded about homelessness, he said, "There *is* no such thing as homelessness." Advocates for the homeless, he maintained, had decided "from a P.R. point of view" that it was necessary to describe the homeless as victims of Republican housing policies. But what Cuomo had concluded after many frigid late nights among people seeking shelter was that the homeless suffered from all the disadvantages and pathologies of the inner-city poor—drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, poor health care, poor skills, poor education, a welfare system that encourages dependency, lack of job opportunities, *and* a dire shortage of affordable housing. Leaning over for a squeeze of interlocutory arm, Cuomo said, "I told homeless advocates, 'Assume you're right in your public-relations argument'—I said this in, like, '86—'where is it going to take us? If you get what you ask for'—shelter—'it's not what we need!' "

Was he saying that homelessness is a more complicated problem—and a more expensive one—than people think? He was. "To admit the complexity is the first step," he said, displaying the politician's gift for the positive spin. Cuomo declared that the only way to mobilize public opinion on behalf of the homeless was to admit past failures and try new methods. As the van rolled to a stop at the side entrance of the Park Central Hotel, where he was to chair a "town meeting" for housing professionals, he was asked whether he really believed that the federal government was going to find the tens of billions of dollars needed to implement the solutions he felt so sure of. A familiar scoffing look crossed Cuomo the Younger's face. "When you have the political will," he said, "you can find the resources."

JOHN SCHLESINGER, JOE BUCK, AND RATSO

"I DON'T remember all these sex toys," John Schlesinger said the other day, his hazel eyes fixed upon the ingenious plastic implements that graced an "adult" window on Forty-second Street. Then he gazed around at the shivering demimonde of hustlers and addicts, and seemed to be summoning up their wraithlike counterparts from a quarter-century ago. "But Times Square remains as decrepit as ever."

The British director, now sixty-eight, had returned to the scene of his greatest work—the streets where he filmed "Midnight Cowboy." Walking along, he stopped before a boarded-up theatre and stood beneath a canopy of broken bulbs. "I think it was here that Jon Voight, in desperation, gets picked up by a young man," Schlesinger said. "They go inside—these theatres had cheap double features all day long—and we see them watching some terrible movie with a spaceship." He laughed. "I'd now change the spaceship's shape and the way it lifts off with an explosion to Voight's orgasm. That was a bit on the nose."

United Artists is re-releasing "Midnight Cowboy" for its twenty-fifth anniversary; it opens this week at the Baronet, where it originally ran for more than a year, smashing house box-office records and winning Schlesinger an Academy Award. The X-rated film (later revised to "R") still shocks, but less for its nudity than for its merciless depiction of the down-and-outers Ratso Rizzo (Dustin Hoffman) and Joe Buck (Voight) and their undoing by the city's vast indifference. The film enshrines a particular historical juncture: cinematically blithe and freewheeling, it nonetheless presaged the antiheroic bleakness of the seventies films to come.

"You couldn't make 'Cowboy' now," Schlesinger declared, slew-footing toward Eighth Avenue. A shortish man with a close-cropped white beard, he wore a midnight-blue leather jacket, a black felt cowboy hat, and a crimson scarf against the cold. Less practically, periwinkle socks peeped out beneath billowing black trousers. "I was recently at dinner with a top studio executive, and I said, 'If I brought you a story about this dishwasher from Texas who goes to

New York dressed as a cowboy to fulfill his fantasy of living off of rich women, doesn't, is desperate, meets a crippled consumptive who later pisses his pants and dies on a bus, would you—' and he said, 'I'd show you the door.' "

Schlesinger went on to say, "We were lucky that it all worked. I was very resistant to casting Jon Voight—that *face*." With three of his fingers he scrunched his nose and cheeks together to mimic Voight's pug-dog mug. "And I very much questioned the choice of Dustin, too. I flew in to meet him, and the two of us walked around this area, and went to a coffee shop across the street there." In vain, he scanned a shuttered stretch that included the New Amsterdam Theatre, which the Walt Disney Company plans to renovate. "Dustin, in a dirty old raincoat, looking grotty, blended in so totally he got the part."

Heading downtown on Ninth Avenue, we passed a vegetable stall at Thirty-ninth Street where Schlesinger said he'd filmed Ratso swiping a day's meal, then stopped for lunch at the Supreme Macaroni Co. "I'm going to be very traditional and have something with meatballs," Schlesinger said before casting his thoughts back to that famously long, hot summer of 1968. "The humidity of New York was unbearable, sweltering," he recalled. "And it was just then that I was beginning to get into the drug scene." He talked about the psychedelic party that is the movie's nostalgic high point: a haze of flash cuts and hallucinatory images, of Warhol's Factory faces: Viva, Ultra Violet, International Velvet, Paul Morrissey. Voight and Brenda Vaccaro smoke a joint and cloudily *experience* a darkroom's red rays. "I didn't have to direct them much, they all knew about it, let's face it," Schlesinger said, grinning. "But I did emphasize the tactile." He rubbed one hand over another with dreamy slowness. "There were many locked doors while we were shooting that scene," he added, touching his tongue to the corner of his mouth. "I never really got to the bottom of who was doing who, but there was a *lot* going on."

Schlesinger twirled spaghetti and returned to lamenting market imperatives. "Nowadays studio executives would say, 'Get Tom Cruise for Joe Buck,' and they would want—I don't know—Sean Penn for Ratso. Everybody's after those twelve magical names that guarantee the movie will get made. They have a demographic *desperation* to please the lowest common denominator, and I'm sure that preview audiences would say that when Jon Voight shoves the phone down in Barnard Hughes's mouth he's too *unsympathetic*. And the wonderful scene where Dustin Hoffman collapses on the steps, and Voight wipes Dustin's head and smooths his hair, and Dustin leans his face against Voight's stomach and puts his arm around him—that would have to go. The deep tenderness of that bond works still, but executives would say, 'Oh, no, that looks *sexual*.' "

"And then we'd all censor ourselves," Schlesinger went on, wearily. "Some gay individuals complained that the film portrayed only the seedy side of gay life, and that it demeaned homosexuals. The truth is that Ratso's use of epithets—his saying 'Faggot! Faggot!'—is a sign of overprotestation. But, with the terrible toll of AIDS and the growth of political correctness, and with homophobia blazoning out, one would feel the need to present a more favorable view of homosexuality, and to show more pleasure in the sex scenes."

Smiling regretfully, Schlesinger concluded, "Lack of knowledge is awfully freeing. It gives you strength to overcome obstacles—obstacles you're not even fully aware of until later." He took a last sip of coffee. "I suppose," he said, hesitating, "I suppose I probably wouldn't make the same film now."

SNOW MAN

MORE than forty-one inches of snow has fallen on the city this winter, and none of it has spent more than a hurried moment or two on the wide sidewalks of Park Avenue. Call it tradition or call it hired help. There, strategies are employed, and falling snow is engaged. There, man as tool user has reached a stage in the evolutionary process that perhaps only those able to afford a Park Avenue apartment from which they will descend by elevator expecting to find a cab within minutes—even in the midst of a raging snow squall—can begin to comprehend, if not fully appreciate. There, you have uniformed doormen, and there, in the swirling thick of it on the afternoon of Friday, February 11th, was one of them, Martin Cacaj.

Among all the shovelled and whisked walkways of Park Avenue, those around the entrance to No. 820, at the corner of Seventy-fifth Street, looked that day to be the cleanest, and that was very clean. Even at the height of the storm, at two o'clock, the only thing on the sidewalk there was Mr. Cacaj himself. Twenty-two years old, and of Albanian ancestry, he is a second-generation Park Avenue doorman. His tools, propped beside him against the doorframe, were four shovels of varying sizes and weights, an ice chopper, and an assortment of brooms. He explained that he uses the smallest of the shovels for digging through curbside banks created by the snowplows clearing the streets, uses the largest for pushing the light, sidewalk-coating accumulations, and uses the brooms to clear what the shovelling cannot. He pointed to a four-foot-wide "taxiway" he had cut through a snow mound to the street and to a foot-wide trough he had dug along the curb at the corner—this to insure that no large puddle of slush forms there. He observed that when he has the chance he walks the avenue after a snowfall to see the work of others, and added that he has yet to find a system or a sidewalk to compare with No. 820's. He would be clearing the snow every hour during the storm, he said, picking up the largest shovel. "What I try to do is loosen my wrists up," he explained, getting to the particulars of his shovelling technique. "And I try to use my forearms mostly, and my legs. You can't ever use your back."

Just then, a tenant approached the entrance, a man returning home through the storm. He said hello to Mr. Cacaj, took hold of one of the light brooms, brushed a patina of snow from his soft leather boots, and disappeared through the door. ♦

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THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

SONY'S BAD DREAM

Sony may not have understood Hollywood when it bought Columbia, but after the disaster of "Last Action Hero" it's getting the picture.

BY JAMES B. STEWART

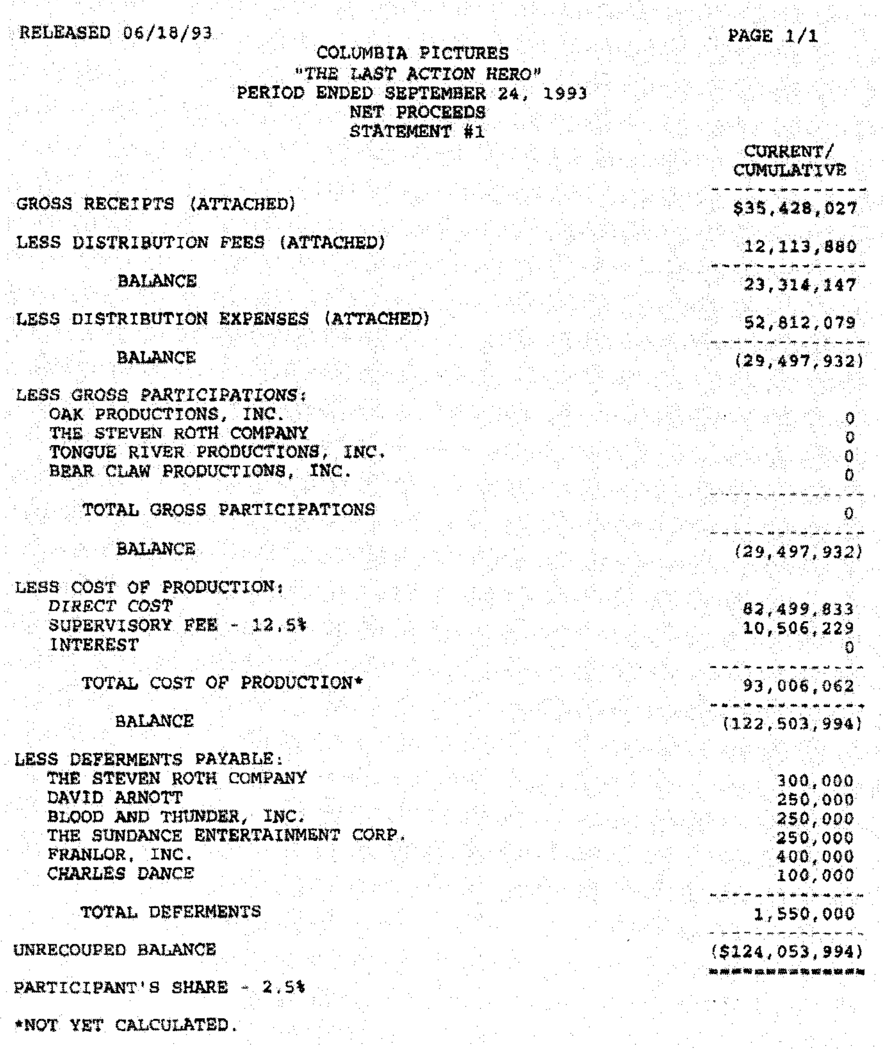
Team Sony: Peter Guber, Jon Peters, and Mark Canton.

LEFT AND RIGHT: CELEBRITY PHOTOS AGENCY; CENTER: RON GALELLA LTD.

IN October of 1992, just weeks after "Last Action Hero," an Arnold Schwarzenegger action comedy, got "green-lighted" by Mark Canton, the head of Columbia Pictures, a meeting was convened in Hollywood to celebrate—and figure out how to exploit—the commercial potential in what was expected to be the studio's biggest blockbuster since it was acquired by Sony, along with TriStar Entertainment, in 1989. "Last Action Hero" was supposed to be the embodiment of the "synergies" that had motivated Sony to move into the film business in the first place, and of the philosophy of Peter Guber, the chairman of Sony Pictures Entertainment, the Sony subsidiary that owns Columbia and TriStar. "Last Action Hero" would be an "event" movie, one that would deliver enormous market-share numbers. It would spawn "Last Action Hero" video games, Arnold Schwarzenegger dolls and other toys, and even a hit soundtrack. Representatives from all Sony's American divisions were flown in for the meeting, which was capped by the appearance of Schwarzenegger himself. "He got everybody so pumped up," recalls a participant. "It's what Arnold does best."

Conspicuously absent from the meeting was anyone from Sony headquarters in Japan. Sony's purchase of the studios, from Coca-Cola, had initially generated widespread fears of a foreign invasion of Hollywood and the loss of an American cultural legacy, but after three years virtually no Japanese employee had taken on any role of importance at either studio. From time to time, the studios had held formal presentations for top Tokyo executives, including Sony's chairman, Akio Morita, and his heir-apparent, Morio Ohga, a courtly classical-music enthusiast and occasional conductor. But the visiting Japanese spoke little English (simultaneous translations were provided), and it goes without saying that no one at Columbia and TriStar had made much progress with Japanese. Morita and his entourage had seemed to enjoy a visit to the spectacular and costly sets for Steven Spielberg's "Hook," a TriStar production, but the visit became a bad memory when "Hook," Sony's big Christmas offering in 1991, proved disappointing at the box office.

So the formal presentations and visits dwindled as the Japanese came to prefer to rely on the reports of Michael Schulhof, in New York, who, as the chairman of Sony Corporation of America, oversees Sony Electronics and Sony Software, which includes both the motion-picture and music divisions. Schulhof assured the Japanese that the studios were focussing on financial results and were reining in costs. This assurance came in the wake of a spending spree that



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RELEASED 06/18/93                                                    PAGE 1/1
                              COLUMBIA PICTURES
                           "THE LAST ACTION HERO"
                       PERIOD ENDED SEPTEMBER 24, 1993
                                NET PROCEEDS
                                STATEMENT #1
                                                                   CURRENT/
                                                                  CUMULATIVE
                                                                ---------------
GROSS RECEIPTS (ATTACHED)                                          $35,428,027

LESS DISTRIBUTION FEES (ATTACHED)                                   12,113,880
                                                                ---------------
          BALANCE                                                   23,314,147

LESS DISTRIBUTION EXPENSES (ATTACHED)                               52,812,079
                                                                ---------------
          BALANCE                                                  (29,497,932)

LESS GROSS PARTICIPATIONS:
   OAK PRODUCTIONS, INC.                                                     0
   THE STEVEN ROTH COMPANY                                                   0
   TONGUE RIVER PRODUCTIONS, INC.                                            0
   BEAR CLAW PRODUCTIONS, INC.                                               0
                                                                ---------------
       TOTAL GROSS PARTICIPATIONS                                            0
                                                                ---------------
          BALANCE                                                  (29,497,932)

LESS COST OF PRODUCTION:
   DIRECT COST                                                      82,499,833
   SUPERVISORY FEE - 12.5%                                          10,506,229
   INTEREST                                                                  0
                                                                ---------------
       TOTAL COST OF PRODUCTION*                                    93,006,062
                                                                ---------------
          BALANCE                                                 (122,503,994)

LESS DEFERMENTS PAYABLE:
   THE STEVEN ROTH COMPANY                                             300,000
   DAVID ARNOTT                                                        250,000
   BLOOD AND THUNDER, INC.                                             250,000
   THE SUNDANCE ENTERTAINMENT CORP.                                    250,000
   FRANLOR, INC.                                                       400,000
   CHARLES DANCE                                                       100,000
                                                                ---------------
       TOTAL DEFERMENTS                                              1,550,000
                                                                ---------------
UNRECOUPED BALANCE                                               ($124,053,994)
                                                                ===============
PARTICIPANT'S SHARE - 2.5%

*NOT YET CALCULATED.
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"Last Action Hero" was supposed to be the "event" movie that would bring in the market share Sony craved. But an internal Columbia financial statement covering its first three months of release shows a loss of more than a hundred million dollars.

Hollywood still talks of with awe. At an exhibitors' convention in Las Vegas soon after the "Last Action Hero" meeting, Mark Canton explained, "We've stopped overpaying. . . . We used to say, 'We want it, no matter how much it costs.' Now we've adopted the mantra of all well-run businesses: 'We want it, but only if the price is right—or if Arnold is in it.' " Canton was so confident that he told the Los Angeles *Times*, "Next summer is the season that will make me or break me."

During that summer, 1993, Columbia, despite some modest box-office successes, lurched from one embarrassing flop to another. The climax was "Last Action Hero," which, despite all the high hopes, failed both at the box office and with critics. ("It was supposed to be a movie within a movie. Turns out it's a movie without a movie," said "Today" 's Gene Shalit.) And then December brought a weak Christmas season and another disaster, the forty-million-dollar "Geronimo: An American Legend," produced by Mark Canton's brother, Neil. The only big money-makers came from TriStar, which, under Michael Medavoy, its chairman, had just completed its most successful year since Sony acquired it, with "Cliffhanger," "Sleepless in Seattle," and "Philadelphia." In spite of that success, however, Medavoy resigned under pressure last month, and Guber promoted Canton to be chairman of both TriStar and Columbia.

The paradox is even more astonishing in light of the financial performance of Columbia under Canton—and particularly of "Last Action Hero." Columbia has done its best to put a bright face on its total financial results, and the task has been made easier by the Tokyo Stock Exchange's lax disclosure rules: they al-

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low Sony to bury its studio results in its over-all entertainment revenues, which include those of the wildly profitable records division. Peter Wilkes, the spokesman for Sony Pictures Entertainment, told me in late January that "Last Action Hero" would do "a hundred and forty-five to a hundred and fifty million dollars worldwide" and would eventually be a "break-even film."

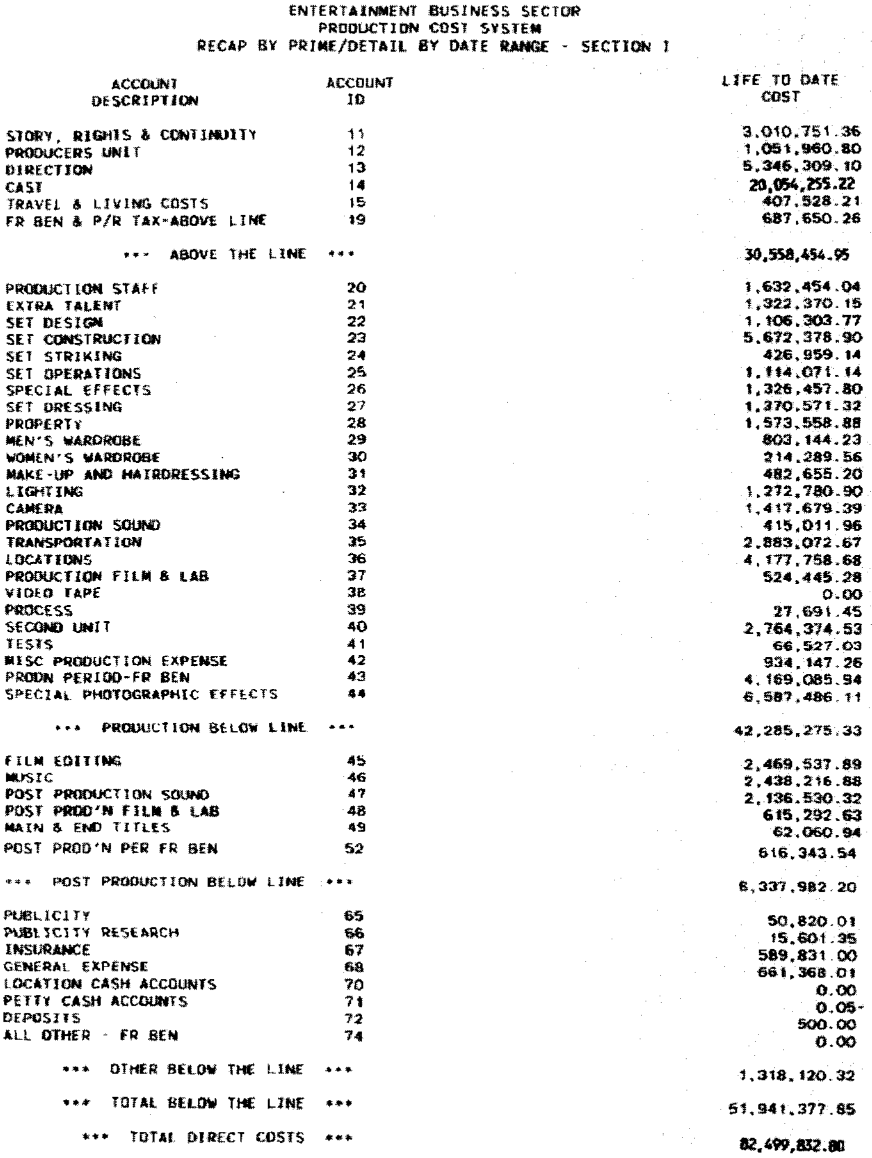
Sony's company line, however, seems hard to reconcile with a recent internal Columbia profit-and-loss statement for "Last Action Hero," a copy of which I obtained. The statement, covering the period from the movie's release, on June 18, 1993, until September 24th, shows an "unrecouped balance" of $124,053,994. Even after one subtracts distribution fees of more than twelve million dollars and a "supervisory fee" of ten and a half million, both of which Columbia paid to itself, the statement shows a loss of more than a hundred million.

Wilkes, asked about the gap, said he would discuss only gross revenues, not profits or losses. Others talk vaguely of additional foreign revenues and an anticipated bonanza from videocassette sales. It's also possible that some accounts receivable hadn't yet shown up in the accounting period that ended in September. But those receipts can hardly be expected to bridge a deficit of this magnitude. By the end of September, "Last Action Hero" had completed its theatrical run in every major foreign market, including Sony's own homeland, where, according to the statement, it yielded a disappointing $3.1 million. Assuming that the Schwarzenegger name boosts videocassette sales to something like four hundred thousand copies (well above the industry norm), and that the tape commands a wholesale price of about sixty dollars, not all of which would be recouped by the studio, it is hard to imagine Sony recovering much more than half of those losses.

To put the "Last Action Hero" losses in some perspective, "Heaven's Gate," the 1980 film that is widely conceded to be the most striking failure in Hollywood history, lost forty-four million dollars, bankrupted United Artists (now a shadow of its former self), and cost nearly all the top studio executives associated with the film their jobs. But not only was Canton promoted; Michael Schulhof took the unusual step of announcing, last November, that he had signed Peter Guber to a new "long-term" agreement.

Even by Hollywood standards, the evident lack of management accountability at Columbia TriStar seems incomprehensible—a peculiar blind spot in the otherwise much praised stewardship of Schulhof. With Morita incapacitated by a stroke, Sony has relied more heavily than usual on Schulhof to run its enormous American operations. Even so, there are growing signs that the legendary patience of the Japanese is being tested. Sony acknowledges that it has retained an investment banking firm, Furman Selz, which is currently seeking to sell a twenty-five-per-cent stake in Sony's entertainment operations, for about three billion dollars. But people familiar with the effort say that both the size of the stake and the price are fluid (though Sony insists that the whole studio operation is not for sale). Many believe that Sony has been hoping to make a public offering of Sony Pictures Entertainment, but has had to defer its plans because of various scandals and flops. "I think selling is a good plan," Katsuhiko Sugiyama, a senior analyst with Merrill Lynch in Tokyo, who says he speaks frequently with Ohga, told me in January. "Sony Pictures Entertainment is still losing money."

WHO could blame the Japanese for wanting to bail out? However farsighted and logical Sony's strategy may



ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS SECTOR
PRODUCTION COST SYSTEM
RECAP BY PRIME/DETAIL BY DATE RANGE - SECTION I

ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	ACCOUNT ID	LIFE TO DATE COST
STORY, RIGHTS & CONTINUITY	11	3.010.751.36
PRODUCERS UNIT	12	1,051,960.80
DIRECTION	13	5,346,309.10
CAST	14	20,054,255.22
TRAVEL & LIVING COSTS	15	407,528.21
FR BEN & P/R TAX-ABOVE LINE	19	687,650.26
*** ABOVE THE LINE ***		30,558,454.95
PRODUCTION STAFF	20	1,632,454.04
EXTRA TALENT	21	1,322,370.15
SET DESIGN	22	1,106,303.77
SET CONSTRUCTION	23	5.672,378.90
SET STRIKING	24	426,959.14
SET OPERATIONS	25	1,114,071.14
SPECIAL EFFECTS	26	1,326,457.80
SET DRESSING	27	1,370,571.32
PROPERTY	28	1,573,558.88
MEN'S WARDROBE	29	803,144.23
WOMEN'S WARDROBE	30	214,289.56
MAKE-UP AND HAIRDRESSING	31	482,655.20
LIGHTING	32	1,272,780.90
CAMERA	33	1,417,679.39
PRODUCTION SOUND	34	415,011.96
TRANSPORTATION	35	2.883,072.67
LOCATIONS	36	4,177,758.68
PRODUCTION FILM & LAB	37	524,445.28
VIDEO TAPE	38	0.00
PROCESS	39	27,691.45
SECOND UNIT	40	2,764,374.53
TESTS	41	66,527.03
MISC PRODUCTION EXPENSE	42	934,147.26
PRODN PERIOD-FR BEN	43	4,169,085.94
SPECIAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EFFECTS	44	6,587,486.11
*** PRODUCTION BELOW LINE ***		42,285,275.33
FILM EDITING	45	2,469,537.89
MUSIC	46	2,438,216.88
POST PRODUCTION SOUND	47	2.136.530.32
POST PROD'N FILM & LAB	48	615,292.63
MAIN & END TITLES	49	62,060.94
POST PROD'N PER FR BEN	52	616,343.54
*** POST PRODUCTION BELOW LINE ***		6,337,982.20
PUBLICITY	65	50,820.01
PUBLICITY RESEARCH	66	15,601.35
INSURANCE	67	589,831.00
GENERAL EXPENSE	68	661,368.01
LOCATION CASH ACCOUNTS	70	0.00
PETTY CASH ACCOUNTS	71	0.05-
DEPOSITS	72	500.00
ALL OTHER - FR BEN	74	0.00
*** OTHER BELOW THE LINE ***		1,318,120.32
*** TOTAL BELOW THE LINE ***		51,941,377.85
*** TOTAL DIRECT COSTS ***		82,499,832.80

How do you spend eighty million dollars on a movie? An addendum to Columbia's statement shows a cost breakdown for "Last Action Hero." It is difficult to imagine that Sony will ever recoup its investment.

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have been, its Hollywood acquisitions have proved a public embarrassment and a financial drain. Nor is Sony's experience unusual. Absentee owners have historically fared poorly in the film industry, whether French (since 1992, Crédit Lyonnais has written off over a billion dollars), Italian (people are still talking about the hapless adventures of Gianni Nunnari and PentAmerica in 1992), or even American (a tough oilman like Marvin Davis got rid of Twentieth Century Fox in 1985, and its new owner, Rupert Murdoch, has taken up residence in town to keep a close eye on his investment). Sony's Japanese rival Matsushita, though its investment in the MCA Corporation has done comparatively well, is also contemplating the sale of its Hollywood assets. The attitude of some Hollywood dealmakers is openly cynical. "The feeling is, These fools, we took them down," one says. "It's nationalistic, in a weird way." He recalls another prominent dealmaker's saying at the time of the Sony purchase, "It's the Japanese this year—three years from now, who knows? We took the French out for a billion—we'll move on to the Chinese."

Now that "the information superhighway" has become a buzzword of the nineties, much talk is heard at Sony about the synergies inherent in the combination of Sony and Columbia TriStar Motion Picture Companies. Sony hopes to use its software divisions to influence the market for new hardware; Sony Music, for instance, is releasing titles in Sony's re-recordable MiniDisc format, not in Matsushita's digital-audiocassette format. But the real impetus for the acquisition was a simple one: Sony's electronics business was rapidly devolving into a commodity operation, with technical innovation diminishing and its costs increasing. Profits in such businesses are largely a function of costs. The rising yen made Japanese exports more expensive, and Sony faced rivals throughout Asia capable of lowering costs. By contrast, the entertainment industry, however tumultuous, offers the prospect of high profits, since its products can't be duplicated. But merely acquiring a "software" producer, a maker of entertainment that could be shown on Sony electronics, was old-fashioned vertical integration, to use an economist's phrase, and in theory that strategy cannot promise greater profit than would exist if the components were separate companies (as the United States auto manufacturers have so painfully learned).

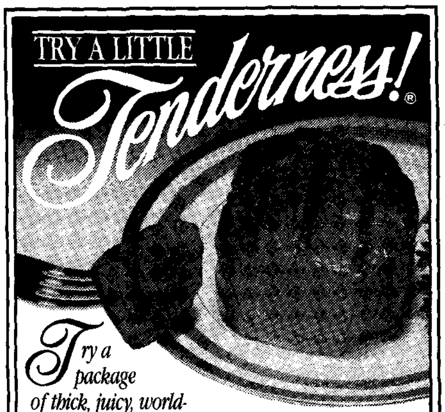
After agreeing to buy the studios, Sony embarked on a search for people to run them—a crucial decision in any creative business, where, as investment bankers say, the most important assets "walk out the door every night." Sony's first choice was Michael Ovitz, the chairman of Creative Artists Agency, who had advised Sony in its search for a studio, eventually leading it to Coca-Cola, which owned Columbia and TriStar. Ovitz never really sought the studio job, but, anxious to avoid offending the Japanese executives, who were paying him a hefty fee, never said no. They apparently got the message when Ovitz gave them a list of candidates he recommended for the job. Neither Peter Guber nor Jon Peters, Guber's partner in a production company that was then doing very well, thanks to the success of "Batman," was on the list. They were already locked into a close relationship with Steve Ross, the head of Warner Brothers.

It was Walter Yetnikoff, the former chief executive of CBS Records, which had been acquired by Sony in 1988, who led Sony to the Guber-Peters Entertainment Company. It was an imaginative, even daring choice; neither Guber, a lawyer, nor the more flamboyant Peters, legendary as Barbra Streisand's former hairdresser, had ever headed a studio (though they had made an abortive run at M-G-M when that studio was on the block). Yet the pair had other strengths, besides their successful production track record. Guber, uniformly described as exceptionally charming, is said to be a brilliant critic of works in progress and an excellent handler of talent in the Steve Ross mold; Peters, however flamboyant, is said to be creative and market savvy. Already wealthy, the two didn't need to prove themselves by running a studio. But Guber, in particular, according to a colleague and friend, saw the job as a challenge he couldn't sidestep. Guber "shoots for the ultimate brass ring," this person says. "He wants Academy Awards and box-office. He wants films that are fairly classy, intelligent, that are big-event films with big names. That's Peter."

Sony paid two hundred million dollars for the Guber-Peters Entertainment Company, and was immediately sued by Warner Brothers for inducing Guber and Peters to breach their long-term producing agreement with Warners; the suit cost Sony five hundred million dollars to settle. Guber and Peters evidently concluded that they needed more experienced hands to actually run the studios, so they recruited Frank Price, a former head of both Columbia and Universal Pictures, who was a reassuringly conservative presence, to run Columbia, and Michael Medavoy, a co-founder of Orion Pictures, to head TriStar. Both were signed to generous contracts. The new management team did not institute any anti-nepotism policy: Guber's wife, Lynda, was given an office and a lucrative production deal; so was Peters' ex-wife, Christine; and his son's girlfriend also found her way onto the payroll. Their offices became known in the company as the Hall of Shame.

Columbia, as part of the settlement with Warners, had to trade its Burbank studios for the old M-G-M production facility in Culver City, which was badly in need of renovation. Under the direction of Guber and Peters, a hundred million dollars was spent to upgrade it and to install, with Sony's encouragement, state-of-the-art electronics. In order to speed the process, crews worked two twelve-hour shifts each day, incurring heavy overtime. While the renovations were lavish—especially that of the marble-swathed landmark Thalberg Building, which was redone in an Art Moderne style and is now occupied by Guber and Canton—no one at Sony was critical of the capital spending, which it conceded was long overdue, or even of a fleet of corporate jets that the new regime acquired. One wonders, however, about the reaction in Tokyo when Guber and Peters had the studios buy their own florist shop, so that executives could have fresh flowers delivered to their offices every day.

Many Hollywood executives, faced with uncertain job security and surrounded by highly paid stars and a culture of instant gratification, consistently behave like adolescents given the run of the house for the weekend. One agent recalls visiting a senior executive at Columbia soon after the renovation of the Columbia studio. When he admired a custom-made credenza in the executive's office, the executive boasted that it had cost Columbia a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars. That's small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change compared with the spending at the very top. Though Jon Peters drew most of the press for his extravagant use of the Columbia jets and for an estate in Aspen that he stocked with wild animals, Peter Guber and his wife have been splurging, too—most recently on a multimillion-dollar renovation of Grant Tinker's former Bel Air estate, complete with lavish landscaping, multiple waterfalls, guesthouses with full kitchens, and a private stairway down a steep hill to the Hotel Bel Air, presumably so the Gubers can order room service. The Gubers also recently bought a Manhattan apartment for more than eight million dollars, in order to strengthen their ties with Sony America's headquarters. That's in addition to a ski lodge in Aspen—a soaring affair, pictured in an issue of *HG*—and a home in the Malibu colony, which is built, appropriately, in the Japanese style.

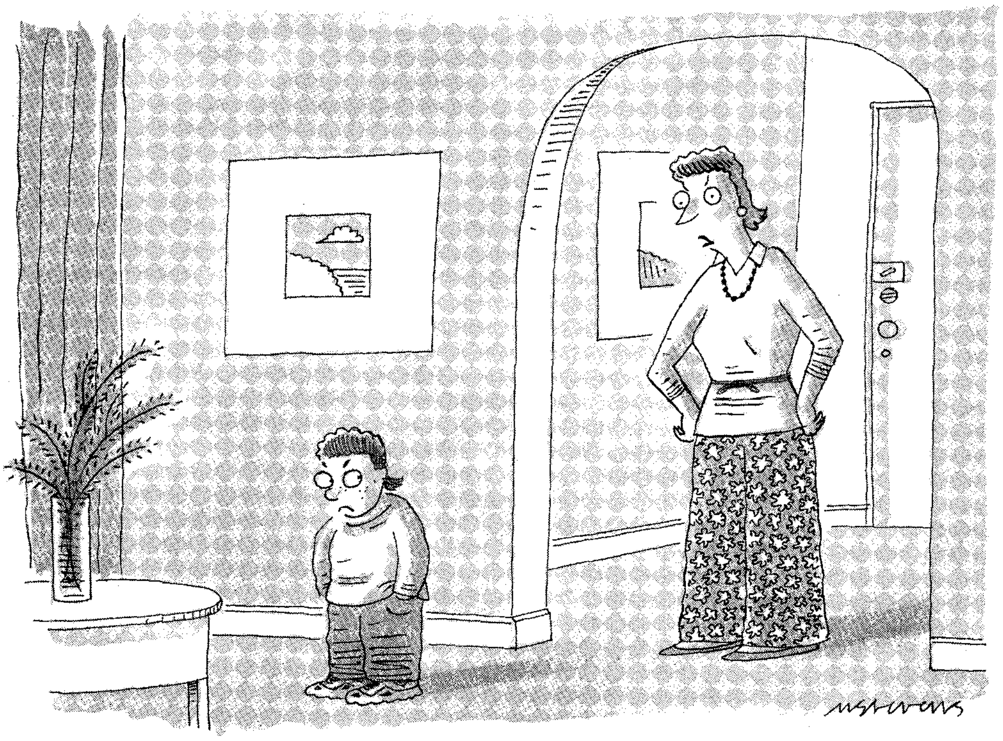
For most of this, of course, they're spending their own money, and, given Sony's largesse, they can certainly afford it. Guber's annual salary has been reported as $2.75 million, but that's a small percentage of his total compensation. Both Guber and Peters have drawn close to three hundred million dollars apiece in compensation from Sony.

At least at the outset, money was not a major concern for Sony. The official price for the two studios and related entities was $3.4 billion, but one executive involved in the transaction says that the purchase actually cost Sony closer to six billion, considering all the collateral costs. Development spending for new products soared partly because Coca-Cola, in anticipation of a sale of the studios, had sharply curtailed production, and the new owners were left with only a handful of projects. Guber and Peters came into their jobs with a strategy, fully embraced by both the Japanese and Schulhof, that relied heavily on a high market share. Guber and Peters "were enfranchised to make as many movies as Warner," one person involved in the deal has said. "In the end, you have to consistently put out films. If a small fraction succeeds, you're a genius. You need product in every season, all the time. Exhibitors count on you. For every five you make, you'll have one hit. You have to be in the traffic."

The strategy is hardly unorthodox, having been used by both Disney and Warners. But while Disney, now notorious for its alleged stinginess, and Warners, to a lesser degree, have linked the strategy to cost controls and sophisticated profit projections, Columbia TriStar went at the task with seeming abandon, signing people to unprecedentedly generous terms and production agreements, and buying every script available, thereby driving up the cost of business for the entire industry. At the same time, Guber and Peters—especially Peters—were eager to plunge into new ventures. Sonyland, a high-tech video theme park, was to be the apotheosis of Sony's resources and Peters' creative genius. Hundreds of acres for its development were set aside near Oxnard, California.

ALL that spending, however, badly eroded Sony's cash flow from entertainment, especially since it was coupled with the debt taken on to finance the purchase and a global downturn in electronics sales. After a year of relative nonintervention, Sony's Japanese executives began steadily increasing their financial scrutiny. In March, 1990, at the annual budget meeting, in New York, which was attended by top Japanese officials, Schulhof, and Guber (but not Peters, whose manner had proved jarring to the Japanese on his first, and only, visit to Tokyo), budgetary constraints were imposed on the studio operations and on development spending. Pressure to boost market share and step up production increased. In early 1991, Sony's United States operations were restructured: from then on, Guber and Peters would report directly to Schulhof, rather than to a committee in Tokyo. Today, approval from Sony of America, presumably in consultation with Tokyo, is required for any high-budget Columbia or TriStar project; one executive says that means anything more than thirty-five million dollars. And funding for Sonyland has all but ended.

The new austerity inevitably claimed casualties in management ranks—beginning, predictably, with Peters. The termination of Sonyland was the last straw in what he evidently saw as a steady campaign to curb his creativity and his entrepreneurial instincts, not to mention his spending. In May, 1991, little more than a year after taking over with Guber, Peters was relieved of his management contract and given an exclusive production agreement with Sony. Though Peters didn't suffer financially, he was relegated to a production facility on the Culver City lot and was rarely seen at the Thalberg Building. He has since accounted for a large share



"You just wait until your other mother gets home, young man!"

of Columbia's new projects, including "Money Train" and "Gangland" (his contract guarantees a significant level of development funding), but he is negotiating a move to Warner Brothers when his contract expires, this spring. People involved in the negotiations say that Warners will allow Peters to pursue his theme-park visions in the company's Six Flags operations, and that it is highly likely that he will sever his relationship with Columbia. Peters himself will not comment, because the terms of his current agreement prohibit him from discussing his dealings with Columbia and Sony.

Curiously, the next head to roll was that of Frank Price, at Columbia: of all Sony's top executives, he had shown the greatest fiscal restraint and had managed to produce some of Columbia's most profitable films. Price gave the go-ahead to a series of reasonably successful pictures, including "Boyz N the Hood," "My Girl," "A League of Their Own," "Single White Female," "Mo' Money," and "Groundhog Day." But Price, with his cautious, deliberative manner, ran afoul of Guber in matters of both style and output. However many hits he generated, and however profitable they proved, they weren't enough in sheer numbers to rival the market share of Disney or Warners. A year and a half into his tenure, there were rumors that he would be ousted. Although there was no confrontation between him and the genial Guber, an ominous lack of support as the rumors proliferated told him what was coming, and in October of 1991 he negotiated a generous settlement of his contract. He was immediately replaced by Canton, then a Warners producer, who had worked closely with Guber and Peters before they went to Sony. Many people believe that Guber had planned to hire Canton all along.

To judge from the comments in Hollywood, Canton is easily one of the most unpopular executives in the industry, and has more than once been referred to as the Dan Quayle of the business. (On being asked about the Quayle comparison, he told the Los Angeles *Times*, "I'm not an empty vessel who has ridden on anyone's coattails.") He was recently quoted in the New York *Times* as saying that he would "take Sunday to put things in perspective" about comments President Clinton had made the day before regarding Hollywood films' being too violent. Then, on Monday, he began bidding for "Overkill," a project notable for its violent content. Canton is widely derided for name-dropping, for becoming obsessed with seating arrangements at company events, and for imperiousness toward anyone he regards as less powerful. His least attractive quality, many say, is his tendency to take credit for other people's work, as he did with the critically acclaimed "In the Line of Fire," Columbia's most successful release last summer. In fact, the film was packaged and produced by Castle Rock Entertainment; Columbia simply financed and distributed it. And Price was rankled to find Canton taking credit for pictures authorized and produced before Canton even arrived at Columbia.

Canton does have his supporters, who, while conceding that he's had a bad year, say it shouldn't obscure his earlier successes, including eleven years at Warner Brothers, which was No. 1 at the box office when he left. Canton is praised for being decisive in a business where indecision can be paralyzing, for a high energy level, for his willingness to work long hours, and for getting projects done. In the wake of Robert Altman's scathing satire "The Player," people in Hollywood like to talk about how hard life is at the top. Canton is one of the few executives who openly revel in their "player" role.

After Price's departure, Guber grew increasingly frustrated with Price's counterpart, Michael Medavoy, at TriStar. Guber and Medavoy had been close friends since the late sixties, when Medavoy was an agent and Guber an executive at Columbia; they travelled in Europe together and played tennis in games Medavoy habitually won. Guber had been enthusiastic about the prospects for Medavoy's big project, "Hook," but Morita's tour of the sets made the movie's poor performance all the more embarrassing. There were no studio tours for the Japanese of Medavoy's next big Christmas feature, the 1992 Warren Beatty film "Bugsy." Though it got some good reviews and was nominated for numerous Academy Awards, "Bugsy" also did badly at the box office.

As with Price, however, what was more costly than such obvious financial failures was Medavoy's failure to increase his output—or, at least, to display the high energy level that Guber liked in his

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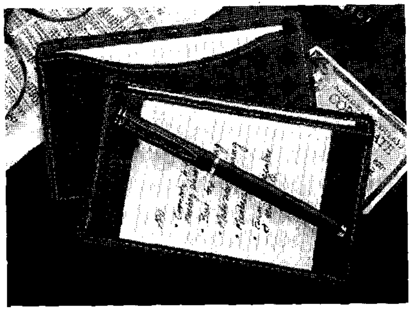

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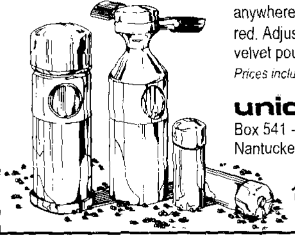

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colleagues, and had always admired in Peters. Medavoy's marriage to Patricia Duff, a glamorous society figure, was under strain. (They are now separated.) Some people at the studio say that in Guber's view Medavoy's personal problems were distracting him from studio business: TriStar produced just eight films in 1992. Their friendship deteriorated rapidly; some say that Medavoy infuriated Guber by treating him like a producer rather than like a studio head. Medavoy says that he always accorded Guber the respect he deserved. They became estranged, however, and lost a sense of mutual trust. Medavoy did respond to the criticism, boosting production and initiating such projects as "Cliffhanger," "Sleepless in Seattle," and "Philadelphia."

It didn't matter. Canton made no secret of his disdain for Medavoy, and Medavoy was probably doomed the day he installed a young Guber-Peters Company executive, Stacey Lassally, as head of production at TriStar. Lassally was a friend and college roommate of Canton's wife, and was married to a Warners executive who happened to be one of Canton's closest friends. Soon Canton and Guber, through Lassally, were all but running TriStar; more and more often, Medavoy learned of decisions after the fact. He confronted Guber, but Guber reportedly denied going behind his back, saying that any such maneuvers were inadvertent. At TriStar, Lassally and her allies got most of the credit for TriStar's successes. When Medavoy finally left, in January, after months of nasty rumors, the only mystery was why it had taken so long.

"I had a year, 1992, when I didn't do enough," Medavoy says. "It was a function of not finding the material I wanted, of breaking in a new group of executives. 'Hook' and 'Bugsy' were preoccupations. We were ramping up. I'd rather have this year's three big hits." Medavoy says he's relieved to be out of the studio maelstrom, yet in his vast château overlooking Los Angeles—built for Patricia—he seems forlorn, even though he is surrounded by celebrity photographs, and seven Academy Awards for best picture are on display.

DESPITE the turmoil and the financial setbacks, by the end of last year Guber could, and did, point with pride to Sony's market share. Both *Variety* and the Hollywood *Reporter* ranked Warner Brothers first, but Guber publicly challenged the rankings, declaring that total revenue of $920 million from Columbia, TriStar, and two Sony-owned distributors, Sony Pictures Classics and Triumph Releasing, gave Sony first place, with a market share of just under twenty per cent. No matter who was actually first, the Sony studios had clearly become a presence to be reckoned with; they were "in the traffic." On the artistic front, Columbia TriStar was heartened by thirty-one Academy Award nominations, led by eight for "The Remains of the Day." These were the first bits of positive news in what had been a run of bad publicity, with the Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss reported to be naming Columbia executives (nothing concrete has emerged), and with Michael Jackson, Sony's biggest recording star, who was working on a movie project for Columbia, facing child-molestation charges. ("It was horrible," one Columbia executive says of last summer. "You couldn't come out of your office without being confronted by a TV reporter.")

The market-share numbers obviously please the Japanese, for they are just about the first thing that Sony publicists mention. Whether they can be maintained, let alone prove to be a foundation for generating significant profits, is open to serious question, for another casualty of the new austerity imposed by the Japanese has been a sharp drop in development funding. At Columbia, in particular, money has recently been going into projects already in development; for instance, the studio is commissioning script rewrites rather than acquiring new material. Agents and other people in the film business throughout Hollywood report that Columbia and TriStar have been in retreat from the bidding scene. Investment bankers have noted that the decline is reminiscent of the production decline that preceded Coca-Cola's sale of the studios.

It's clear that all or part of Columbia TriStar is for sale at the right price. In the aftermath of the bidding for Paramount, Schulhof boasted to *Forbes*, "I've met the chairman of every phone company. And I didn't initiate the phone calls." A quarter interest's being offered at three billion dollars puts a twelve-billion-dollar value on Sony's movie and music companies, and Sony defends that figure as justified by the asset values being realized by Paramount. But no one believes that Sony can realize Paramount's asset values by selling only a quarter interest, because the Paramount value reflects a premium for gaining control of the company. Nor does it appear that Sony has yet shown prospective investors any detailed results for the studios' operations, preferring to talk instead about asset values and market share and to maintain that the studios are profitable. Both Medavoy and Price, who had access to financial records for their respective studios, say that the operations were indeed profitable. A person who saw the combined results for the studio operations agrees, but says that the operating profits never exceeded a hundred million dollars. And, of course, the 1993 numbers are still in doubt, because the "Last Action Hero" and "Geronimo" losses have not been figured in. (Sony's fiscal year ends March 31st.) Besides, all these numbers, whatever they finally come to, do not include charges for debt and depreciation, and not even the most optimistic Sony executive contends that any profit has been realized when the acquisition and financing costs are included. That's a devastating performance in an industry where a twelve-per-cent annual return on investment is considered reasonable.

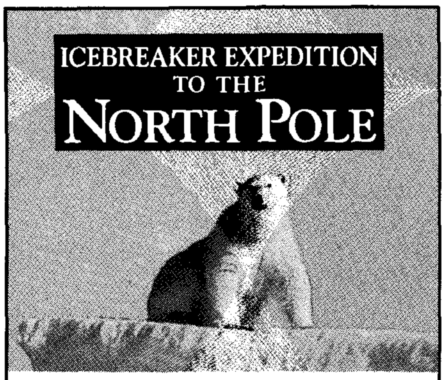
Paradoxically, as long as Columbia TriStar is on the block Guber's tenure as studio chief seems secure. Any change at the top would send the wrong signal to prospective buyers or investors, especially when Sony is trying to put the best possible face on its Hollywood investment. This would be true even if Guber hadn't managed to establish a personal relationship with Schulhof, the kind that has characterized his entire career. Not only do Schulhof, the former engineer, and Guber, the stylish creative head, complement each other, but their personal lives have become intertwined. Guber's daughter and Schulhof's son recently began living together, and some people in Hollywood are reacting to that event with all the fascinated interest that must have greeted Eleanor of Aquitaine's engagement to Henry II.

Schulhof declined to comment on his relationship with Guber or any other aspect of this story; a Sony spokesman in New York says that Schulhof is "bored" with talking about the motion-picture companies and his relations with the Japanese. The Sony spokesman in Los Angeles, Peter Wilkes, also declined requests for interviews with Guber and Canton. When I originally called Sony to ask for interviews, both Schulhof and the Sony spokesman in New York were out of town, and in their absence I spoke with Ken Yoshida, a Japanese executive who is just completing his tour at Sony of America, and will soon be returning to Tokyo. We met in Sony's office on West Fifty-seventh Street, in a room with commanding views of Central Park. (The new Sony Plaza, on Madison Avenue, is already filled to capacity, he explained.) Yoshida, who is thirty-four and speaks good English, was studiously polite but nervous, saying he'd never before met with anyone from the American press.

Yoshida confirmed what I had already heard. Sony officials in Tokyo had imposed spending constraints on Columbia TriStar after the first year. "The operation spent a lot of money the first year," he said. "We had to make more movies. They had to spend more. They renovated the Culver City studio. They installed a lot of new technology from Sony. That's an investment. It's natural, because Sony is the parent. Now more discipline has been imposed. Sony's financial performance has not been bright."

He seemed largely unaware of the management turmoil inside Columbia and TriStar. He said, with evident pride, that Schulhof had told him and other Japanese officials that "in the past two years Sony has had the most stable management in Hollywood." Yoshida also acknowledged that Sony would indeed be interested in selling a stake in its entertainment businesses. "With nearly twelve billion dollars in debt, it's natural to think about reducing it," he said. "If we can get additional capital, we can reduce debt."

At the end of the interview, as Yoshida readied a demonstration of Sony's new high-definition-television technology, I asked what Sony had learned from its ownership of the studios. Yoshida paused, then smiled slightly and said, "We see there are ups and downs in Hollywood." ♦



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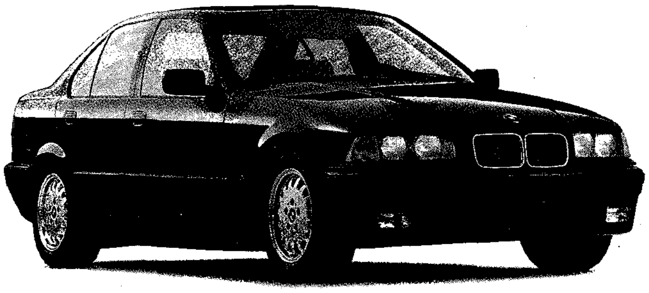

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FAMILY TREE

LAST OF THE LINCOLNS

Generational eccentricities confounded all hopes that the Lincolns would be a great political dynasty—right down to the mystery of the last heir.

BY MICHAEL R. BESCHLOSS

AT 6:05 P.M. on Christmas Eve, 1985, Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, the gnarled, scraggly-bearded, eighty-one-year-old great-grandson of America's most revered President, convulsed and died in a nursing home in Saluda, Virginia, forty-five miles from Richmond, "the cradle of the Confederacy." His death followed by six score years that of the Great Emancipator. After Beckwith's wife—his third—telephoned a request to the Bristow-Faulkner Funeral Home to pick up the corpse, reporters began calling Elizabeth R. Young, a lawyer who had served the Lincoln family for half a century. She told them, "Yes, he was a direct descendant of Abraham Lincoln—the last living descendant of Abraham Lincoln as far as I know."

Not everyone agreed—especially Beckwith's young, German-born second wife, Annemarie. She insisted that her seventeen-year-old son, Timothy Lincoln Beckwith, who was conceived two months after her marriage to Beckwith, in 1967, had been fathered not by some acquaintance or household servant, as Beckwith claimed, but by Beckwith himself. This would mean that Robert Beckwith was not the last of the Lincolns.

It would also mean that the boy deserved a share of the multimillion-dollar Mary Harlan Lincoln Testamentary Trust, a fund that had been established by Abraham Lincoln's daughter-in-law before her death, in 1937, to benefit her descendants. Complicating the issue is a fact never revealed before now: according to lawyers for both sides, after the principal was disbursed to three not-for-profit institutions they secretly conferred on Timothy a settlement of more than a million dollars.

DESPITE Americans' supposed resistance to the trappings of European royalty, we have always yearned for political dynasties, hoping that the qualities admired in one leader will be replicated in the leader's progeny. In no case could this hope have been stronger than in that of the greatest President in American history. But history played a practical joke on the Lincolns: the President was followed by a procession of heirs better described by Flaubert than by Tolstoy. Thanks to John Wilkes Booth, the chief influence on later generations of the House of Lincoln proved to be not the great man of New Salem and Springfield but his tormented eldest son, Robert Todd Lincoln.

Abraham Lincoln loved the common people, but Robert, from his days at Phillips Exeter Academy and Harvard, had little use for them. He amassed a fortune as a lawyer, a banker, and a corporation director. He became the special counsel and then the president of the Pullman Palace Car Company, and, in 1894, in one of the most notorious labor-management confrontations in American history, defended the use of Army troops to fight striking Pullman workers. Humiliated by his father's rude frontier origins, the old plutocrat insisted to intimates that stories of the Kentucky Lincolns' poverty were all wrong. Robert is said to have felt that to avoid misconceptions his father's log-cabin birthplace should be torn down.

As if anticipating his grandson's problems a century later, Robert was confronted by evidence that Abraham Lincoln's maternal grandmother was illegitimate and by stories that the sixteenth President himself was sired by someone other than his father of record. The President's former law partner and eventual biographer, William H. Herndon, interviewed dozens of Kentuckians who had known the Lincoln family, and he became convinced that Thomas Lincoln was sterile and could not have been Abraham's father. As early as the eighteen-seventies, there was speculation that Lincoln's father had ac-

[*Hillary not included.]

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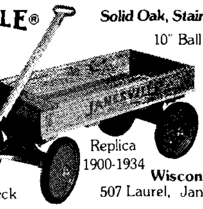

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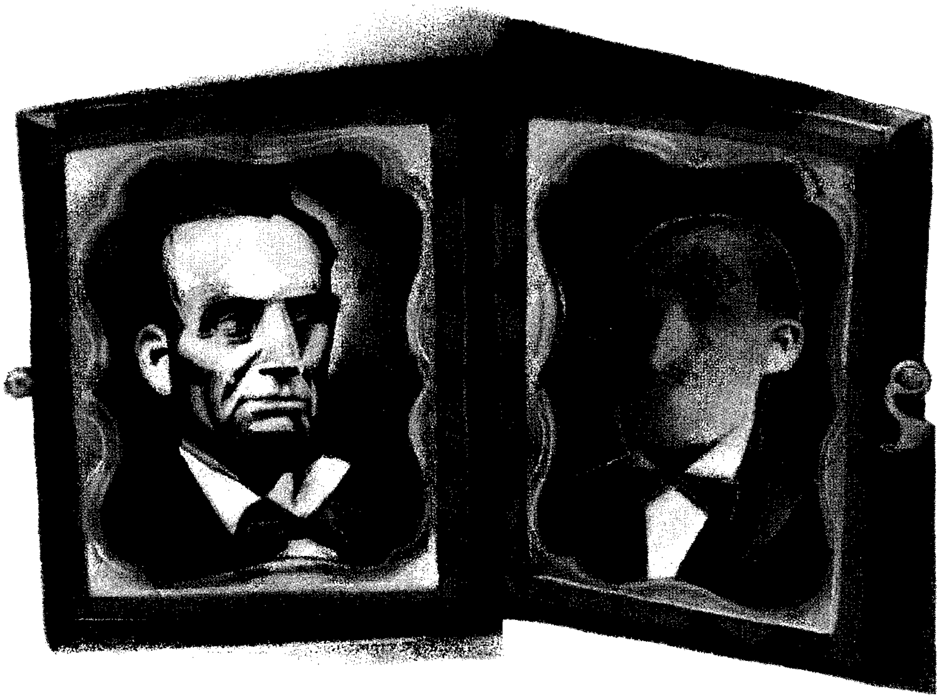
tually been, ironically, John C. Calhoun, the champion of states' rights, or perhaps even Samuel Davis, the father of the President of the Confederacy.

Robert Lincoln's fearsome sense of dignity was also offended by the nickname Honest Abe. When a book was about to be issued under that title, he implored the publisher to change it. The "epithet," he said, was used only in Lincoln's boyhood on the frontier, a "civilization which did not know how to express itself with propriety." After Robert began earning large sums, he installed his family in one of the grand houses of Georgetown. (It is now owned by Ben Bradlee and Sally Quinn.) For summers, he built a twenty-four-room Georgian-revival manor house on several hundred acres in Manchester, Vermont, which he dubbed Hildene and began referring to as his "ancestral home." Mary Hard Bort, a Manchester history buff who later lived on an adjoining farm, says, "Some say he hated Negroes, others say he didn't."



GARY KELLEY

Defensive about his interest in material grandeur, Robert declared that his father's business ambitions had been more powerful than had been popularly presumed. His grandson later told a reporter the family story that as a Springfield lawyer Abraham Lincoln had earned more than three thousand dollars a year and had once wrung from a major railroad a five-thousand-dollar fee—thought to be the highest single fee any Illinois attorney had ever earned. And during the Civil War, he went on to say, Lincoln had once strolled into the office of the Secretary of the Treasury, carrying greenbacks, treasury notes, and a bag of gold, and said, "Convert this to government bonds!"

A Robert-Lincoln-for-President boom had inevitably begun almost the moment his father was murdered. But, although Robert did become Secretary of War to Presidents James Garfield and Chester Arthur and Minister to Great Britain under Benjamin Harrison, he felt, he said, "a repugnance to what is called 'public life' that is almost morbid." He saw the White House as "a gilded prison," and added, "there is not the faintest glamour about the place to me." He was more interested in becoming known as a captain of industry. One poignant episode may have been an even more important reason that Robert never ran for the Presidency.

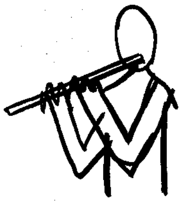
In 1875, in the public glare of a Chicago court, Robert Lincoln demanded that his mother, Mary Todd Lincoln, be committed to a mental asylum, over her objections: "Oh, Robert, to think that my son would do this to me!" He cited her profligate spending and derisively alluded to her spiritualism. Despite the President's considerable estate, Mary had publicly demanded after his death that Congress give her an annual pension (she got it), had tried to sell off her White House wardrobe in a garish New York auction (she failed), and had gone on to make more news by compulsively shopping for other gowns and for household goods she did not need. Castigated by the press, she decamped to Europe with her fifteen-year-old son Tad in 1868. They roamed through Germany, Italy, France, Scotland, Austria, and England. The boy died of a cold contracted during their voyage back to America, in 1871, leaving Robert the only survivor of her four children, all sons. After her return, the grieving Mary Todd tried to destroy Robert's marriage by casting aspersions on her reclusive daughter-in-law, Mary Harlan Lincoln, who was known to drink too much. Robert's wife, in turn, did nothing to discourage him from pressing ahead with the insanity trial.

For a century, it has been generally accepted that the President's widow was a madwoman and Robert was justified in having her committed. However, recent scholars believe that the problem was less the widow's mental health (she was, it seems, highly eccentric but capable of caring for herself) than the son's designs on his mother's money and his wish to get her out of public view. Jean H. Baker, in her 1987 "Mary Todd Lincoln: A Biography," notes that the chief spender of Mary's money was not Mary but Robert: he asked his mother for interest-free loans for money-losing real-estate schemes "that his father would have despised." When Mary managed to spring herself from the asylum, after only four months of incarceration, she threatened to kill Robert, her "monster of mankind son," and wrote to him demanding restitution for his "wickedness," on the ground that "you have tried your game of robbery long enough." Nevertheless, after Mary Todd died, of a stroke, in 1882, it was discovered that she had made no effort to keep Robert from inheriting $84,035 and her sixty-four trunks of dresses, jewelry, flatware, and other goods.

So deep ran Robert Lincoln's sense of embarrassment and, perhaps, guilt that he became obsessively secretive. He told his wife and their children to operate as far from the public eye as possible and to restrict their acquaintance to a narrow circle of intimates and lawyers. He refused to sit for photographs, in order to "keep out the vile newspaper cuts." Increasingly, he tortured himself with the thought that he might have been able to save his father's life. On the fatal day in 1865, having ridden into Washington with official news of Lee's surrender, he had felt too tired to accompany his parents to Ford's Theatre. Had he been sitting at the back of the President's box, could he have stopped Booth from lurching toward his father's chair? The son who had ridiculed his mother's spiritualism in court was staggered that he was present at both the Presidential assassinations that followed his father's—Garfield's and William McKinley's. After the latter, Robert resolved to avoid proximity to any President.

ROBERT and Mary Harlan Lincoln had two daughters, Mary (nicknamed Mamie) and Jessie, and one son, Abraham Lincoln II, who died in 1890 of blood poisoning, at the age of sixteen. As noted in "The Lincoln Family Album," a book of photographs and anecdotes, "Jack" had been a handsome, bright, athletic boy, fascinated by the Civil War, who practiced signing his name A. Lincoln in the manner of the President. Robert had been grooming him for Exeter, Harvard, and law school. It is fair to say that the death of this impressive young man ended any hope that Abraham Lincoln's greatness might be carried into future generations. The father wrote to his friend John Hay, "I did not realize until he was gone how deeply my thoughts of the future were in him." Mary Harlan took up Christian Science.

Just as Mary Todd had tried to pry Mary Harlan from Robert after Tad's death, Mary Harlan undermined the marriage of her younger daughter, Jessie, to Warren Wallace Beckwith, a star halfback on the Iowa Wesleyan football team. He later told a reporter, "Mrs. Lincoln was always interfering in our marriage," because she had been "lonely since the death of her son Abraham Lincoln II" and did not want to part with her daughter. The couple had a daughter and a son, whose given names, interestingly, were the same as those of the antagonists in the insanity trial. Mary Lincoln Beckwith, called Peggy, was born in 1898, and Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith was born in 1904.



About a year after Robert's birth, Mary Harlan scooped up Jessie and both children and removed them to London, which she had favored since her husband had served as Minister there. Warren Beckwith recalled, "I said I was going to get a divorce. Old Mrs. Lincoln said I couldn't get one, but I showed her." A few years after their departure, Beckwith won an uncontested divorce on grounds of desertion. "I didn't ask for custody of the children, because they were with Jessie and she and her family were much better able to support them than I was," he explained to a reporter. After the divorce, he never saw his daughter or his son again.

Peggy Beckwith grew up in Washington, D.C., and became a squat, fair-haired, blue-eyed chain smoker who golfed and dabbled in oil painting and sculpture. Unlike Mary Todd Lincoln, she abhorred fashion, favoring knickers and men's shirts. As an adult, she is not known to have ever had a serious romance with a man. Anticipating the question of whether she was a lesbian, a friend who knew her late in life pointedly says that Peggy "liked being alone" and "spent the evenings alone." Another, Mary Bort, notes that during the period between the World Wars educated women like Peggy often tended to "join forces in various and sundry ways, not necessarily sexual," and adds, "Today, homosexuality is way up front all the time." Though Peggy was not an active Christian Scientist, she occasionally sought counsel from the members of that church. In the late nineteen-twenties, she took up aviation.

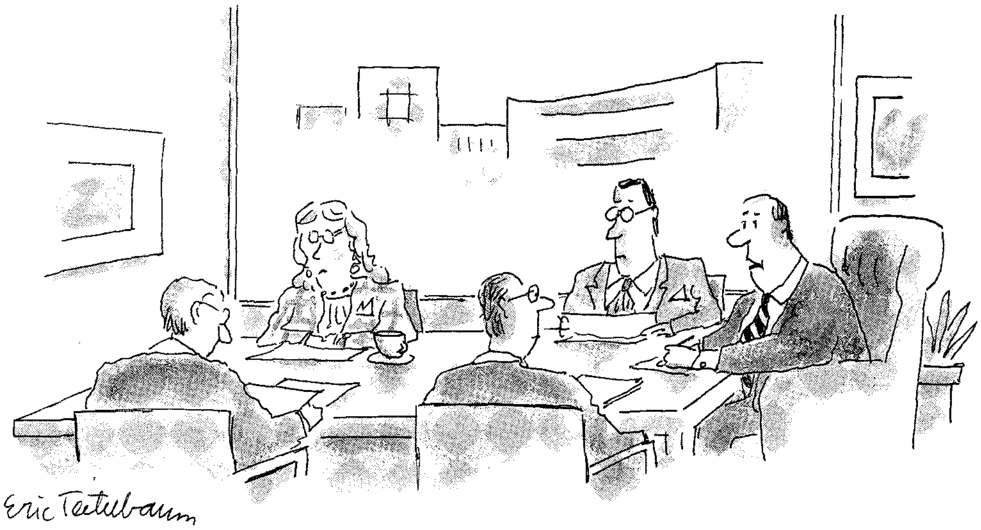
When Mary Harlan Lincoln died, in 1937, at the age of ninety, she left a $3.3-million estate—Mary Todd's legacy, much amplified by Robert's earnings and investments. The income was to be divided among Peggy, her brother, and their cousin, Lincoln Isham, Mamie's only child. This cousin was born in New York City in 1892; was cross-eyed; matriculated at Harvard but dropped out from exhaustion; married a New York socialite; and died in 1971, childless, in Dorset, Vermont. After Mary Harlan's death, Peggy installed herself at Hildene, and rarely left it, once telling a reporter, "When you run a 250-acre farm, there isn't time for much else." She made up losses from her trust income, saying, "Profit? Well, I'm in danger of running out of the red, but don't tell the tax collectors about it."

Peggy adored animals, raising wild turkeys and feeding infant raccoons from a baby bottle. She once discarded a new car because, her neighbor Oscar Johnson says, "the dogs weren't happy with it." Her farm manager, Kenneth Hill, once recalled that when Peggy and a friend visited New York the hotel management would not let her keep her collie in the room, and "they got back here in the wee hours of the night." Maggie Paine of the Manchester *Journal* recalls tales that after Peggy's death, in 1975, the mansion at Hildene was in "a terrible mess" because she had "let wild animals loose in the house."

"She's an odd one," the Chicago bookseller and Lincoln scholar Ralph G. Newman observed in 1974. "I would call her an eccentric recluse. She's a big, fat gal who doesn't give a damn about Abraham Lincoln, and she's rebuffed any attempts by historians to interview her or look for family papers on the farm." Peggy once said to a reporter, "It always provokes me when people stare and say, 'There's Lincoln's great-granddaughter.' It's just my luck he was related to me." Pressed for stories about her ancestor, she snapped, "I'm as far away from him as anyone else."

"You never introduced her as the great-granddaughter of Abraham Lincoln," her friend Howard Wilcox, whose uncle was Robert Todd Lincoln's chauffeur, told the Manchester *Journal*. Although Peggy's excellent golf during a competition almost made her the Vermont state champion, as soon as the press got wind of who she was she packed up and went home. Sometimes at Hildene she came downstairs and found strangers roaming through her parlor, admiring her Lincoln artifacts as if her house were a museum. Once, reporters lurking in the woods failed to recognize her when she strolled up the driveway in her workman's clothes. "How long will we have to wait until she comes along?" one asked. "Forever!" she cried. "Now, get out of here!"

Her rare public ventures went badly. In 1954, she expressed the opinion to a reporter that if Abraham Lincoln "were living today he would be an Eisenhower Republican." On being told in 1959 that the United States Navy was building sister nuclear submarines called the Abraham Lincoln and the Robert E. Lee, she showed her ignorance of history by saying that Lincoln "would have liked that" and adding, "You know, they were good friends, though they didn't agree politically." She ordinarily took the phone off the hook on Lincoln's Birthday, but on that occasion in 1963, at the height of the civil-rights revolution, the Great Emancipator's great-granddaughter told a U.P.I. reporter of her family, "We're Southerners, but I don't think of the South as a separate culture. It's part of the Union. The aggression of the federal government in forcing integration concerns me, and I disagree with the stand taken by Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy on this matter." Desegregation could not be forced down people's throats, she went on. "People and animals just don't like strangers. And when strangers are suddenly thrown together, people and animals alike bristle."



"If Anderson is C.E.O., and Wyatt is C.F.O., and you're C.O.O., then who am I, and what am I doing here?"

• •

PEGGY'S brother, Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, described himself as a "gentleman farmer of independent means." Averse to work, he once told a reporter, "I'm a spoiled brat." Though he was short, balding, and round-bellied, and occasionally had a bad stutter, he thought of himself as a playboy, and once proclaimed that his great passions were sailing, fast cars, and beautiful women. In 1925, when Beckwith, then twenty-one, and a female acquaintance made one of the first coast-to-coast motor tours of the American continent, he was arrested in Omaha for speeding. One friend recalls, "Bob loved to hit intersections at flying speed. He'd turn to me and say, 'Am I making you nervous?' " At twenty-five, he married Hazel Holland Wilson, an older widow with two children.

Beckwith and Hazel, who had no children together, shuttled between Washington, D.C., and Woodstock, a farm in Hartfield, Virginia—sometimes in a shiny new Lincoln. Jessie, who died in 1948, left Beckwith the farm, which had been established in 1790. It had a white-columned brick mansion, formal gardens, and fields of soybeans and corn on the Piankatank River. In the master bedroom, Beckwith kept on his dresser a yellowed portrait of Abraham Lincoln in a gold frame. A local reporter once wrote, "To visit the Woodstock master bedroom is to visit a Lincoln bedroom of White House times."

James T. Hickey, formerly the Lincoln curator at the Illinois State Historical Library, who was a friend and adviser of Beckwith's, says that Beckwith was "extremely generous" and "enjoyed giving to others." He put "several people through school and never wanted any recognition," Hickey says, adding, "Remember, he was always taught by his grandfather not to say who he was."

Even though Beckwith lent his yacht to the United States Coast Guard during the Second World War and fitfully served as the family's official Lincoln descendant, he usually seemed to share his sister's ostentatious lack of curiosity about their great-grandfather: "I was not especially interested." In 1947, when the Library of Congress opened a set of Abraham Lincoln's papers that Robert Todd Lincoln had ordered sealed for twenty-one years after his death, Beckwith asserted that there "probably won't be anything of very great importance." (He was wrong; the papers added much to our knowledge of Lincoln.) Public life? He said in 1962, "I never take part in politics. None of the family does." For many years, Beckwith did not bother to vote. His lawyer, Elizabeth Young, has said that in their fifty-year acquaintance they never discussed his ancestry: "Socially, it's not done, and in business I talked about what I was paid to talk about."

But after Hazel's death, in 1964, Beckwith went to the New York World's Fair, posed with a huge Lincoln bust, and pronounced Walt Disney's talking Lincoln figure "wonderful." On the centennial of Lincoln's death, in 1965, he toured Lincoln sites in Springfield for the first time. Attending a Civil War party there, he impressed the historians present by asking the jazz band to play "Dixie," just as Lincoln had done after Appomattox to symbolize the Union's reëmbrace of the South.

Despite these forays into the limelight, life back at Woodstock grew darker. A local newspaper noted in October of 1967 that "outside of house servants and tenant farmers, Beckwith lives alone in Woodstock with memories of famed ancestors." Friends found him depressed at the prospect of being the last descendant of Abraham Lincoln. According to lawyers who have examined sworn testimony in the files of Beckwith's suit for divorce from his second wife, Annemarie, most of which are now sealed, the lord of the manor initiated wild parties in the master bedroom dominated by Lincoln's portrait, and the participants were both women and men, including some who worked the farm and served the house. One attorney who interviewed Beckwith and read the files recalls him as "a lecherous, debauched, unkempt, dirty old man," and adds, "It occurred to me that this was a classic case of what happens in great families when the blood runs thin."

On November 6, 1967, Beckwith, who at sixty-three was in the early stages of Parkinson's disease, married Annemarie Hoffman, a twenty-seven-year-old German woman. She commuted to Williamsburg to attend classes at the College of William and Mary, staying in a hotel and returning to Woodstock on weekends. In May of 1968, according to Beckwith, he opened a medical report sent to Annemarie at the farm which said that she was pregnant. The circumstances are documented in the divorce files. Beckwith, having had a vasectomy with a prostatectomy six years earlier, asked his urologist to establish whether he could be the father. After taking X-rays and procuring a physical specimen, the doctor found him to be "completely sterile."

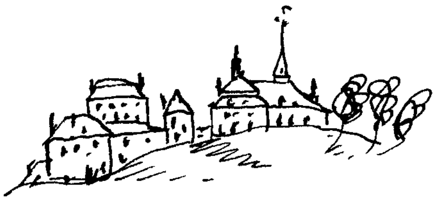
In September, late in Annemarie's pregnancy, Beckwith compelled his wife, who was penniless, to sign an agreement stating that the unborn infant's birth certificate would list the actual father or say "John Doe" or "Father Unknown." Each would make no claim against the other's estate. He would pay the costs of her confinement and also give her seventy-five hundred dollars. She would give him back a set of ivory-handled cutlery that had been a gift from Henry Clay to Abraham Lincoln. (Annemarie later said, in her Answer to Beckwith's Complaint, that she had signed the document under "fraud and duress.") And, although it was not formally in the agreement, he expelled her from the farm.

That December, two months after Timothy's birth (the birth certificate lists Beckwith as the father), Annemarie took Timothy—unwittingly in the manner of Mary Todd Lincoln and Tad—to Europe. For seven years, the mother and child lived in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Beckwith asked the court to rule that he was not Timothy's father, so that the boy could make no claim against the family trust. This issue was tabled until Beckwith could sue Annemarie for divorce, on the ground of adultery, but the divorce trial was delayed for years, as an opinion of the appellate court put it, by Annemarie's effort to insure that the outcome would not damage Timothy's right "to inherit under the Mary Harlan Lincoln Testamentary Trust." Annemarie countersued Beckwith, claiming that he had committed adultery at the farm and "at various places" during their marriage. Beckwith, she said, had "destroyed" her happiness and "rendered her life so miserable and unendurable as to force" her to find refuge with family in Germany.

Divorce proceedings began in Washington a century to the year after Mary Todd's insanity trial. Twisting through the case were the same issues of illegitimacy, money conflicts, and public humiliation which had horrified Robert Todd Lincoln. Judge Joseph M. F. Ryan, Jr., of the District of Columbia Superior Court, awarded Annemarie three thousand dollars in counsel's fees and eleven hundred dollars to come to the United States for trial, on the condition that she agree to submit herself and her son to blood tests that would determine whether Timothy was Beckwith's son.

The press rendered all this as opéra bouffe. The Washington *Star:* "Lincoln Descendancy at Stake in Adultery Trial: Blood Tests Ordered on Eight-Year-Old Boy." Annemarie recalled in her testimony that she was in Italy in April of 1976, when the case burst into the newspapers: "An acquaintance in Berlin telephoned me to tell me that newspaper articles said Timothy would be a millionaire. . . . Shortly thereafter my residence and place of employment were besieged by representatives of the press wanting interviews with and photographs of me and my son. Anonymous threats to kidnap my son for ransom were telephoned to my apartment."

Annemarie flew to the United States, but refused to submit herself or her son to blood tests. Judge Ryan declared her in contempt of court. In an affidavit, she resisted attempts to link the divorce to the issue of Timothy's paternity: "I still believe that my son should not be involved in any way in this suit between me and my husband. I am concerned for his safety and wish to protect him from publicity." She also wished "to protect my son's interests, both as to his privacy and such property rights as he may have, and to protect my own similar interests." Before the court, two doctors displayed evidence of Beckwith's sterility. In the absence of blood tests, with Annemarie effectively defaulting, Judge Ryan granted the divorce in September of 1976, ruling that Timothy was the product of an "adulterous relationship." But the court also ruled that this finding would not prevent the boy from pressing a future claim.



Annemarie's chief lawyer, Thomas Penfield Jackson, pointedly told the Washington *Post* that Beckwith had not proved adultery because he had not addressed the possibility that Annemarie had been "forced" to have relations with another man. It is perhaps important that legal records show that in the same month Beckwith married Annemarie he opened a joint checking account in Urbana, Virginia, in his name, Annemarie's, and that of Jack Coffelt, who was Beckwith's chauffeur. The account was closed in May of 1968, the same month that Beckwith discovered Annemarie's pregnancy and began proceedings to evict her from his house. On the basis of the sealed files, one member of Annemarie's legal team now speculates, "I think Beckwith wanted an heir, but thought he was sterile. There was some suggestion in the transcripts that when she actually got pregnant he had tired of her and wanted to pay her off and get rid of her. But she resisted and wanted to stay with him. I think she was a decent person. Given the circumstances of Timothy's arrival in this world, Beckwith certainly owed him."

Not long after the divorce decree, Beckwith married an old friend named Margaret Fristoe. When Peggy Beckwith had died, in 1975, she left Hildene to the First Church of Christ, Scientist, to be preserved as a "memorial" to her mother and grandparents. The church sold it to a group of Manchester-area locals, who had pooled funds to buy the estate as the Friends of Hildene. Beckwith, morose and wasted from Parkinson's, arrived from Virginia, made sure that Peggy's personal papers were burned (at her request), and, with help from James Hickey, went through trunks that dated back to Mary Todd Lincoln. In the house, the two men discovered a bundle of letters and documents untouched since Robert Lincoln's death. The bundle, tied with a ribbon, was labelled "MTL Insanity File."

Just as Rosebud provided a key to Charles Foster Kane, the fact that the surreptitious Robert Todd Lincoln went to the length of preserving this set of papers explains much of what happened to him and the later Lincolns. The file includes documents on Mary Todd's illness that, so Robert obviously thought, would exculpate him of guilt in his mother's ordeal. Urged on by Hickey, Beckwith gave the letters to the Lincoln scholars Mark E. Neely and R. Gerald McMurtry. The two could not believe their good fortune. Beckwith later wrote that, "as the last member of my family," he had resisted the urge to destroy the file, because it would help history to "treat my great-grandmother Mary Todd Lincoln more kindly" and also to "recognize that my grandfather acted in the best possible way towards his mother." Just as the file was about to be published, Beckwith died in his nursing home of a heart attack. His ashes were released into the river that flowed past Woodstock.

ONE item of business was left. The Mary Harlan Lincoln trust stated that if no Lincoln heir remained the principal (which had by now reportedly grown into eight figures) was to be divided among three beneficiaries: the American Red Cross, Iowa Wesleyan College, and the First Church of Christ, Scientist. This required that no one claim descendancy. Timothy Beckwith and his mother, who has now remarried and is living in the United States, were quietly approached. Although the institutions knew that the move might leave some question about the boy's paternity, they settled a considerable sum on Timothy—a structured settlement, with regular payments and a lump-sum payment at the end—so that their legacy would be free and clear.

Abraham Lincoln would have scoffed at the notion that he should have been expected to father a political dynasty. His entire life, which began a hundred and eighty-five years ago this month, was testimony to Thomas Jefferson's idea of an American aristocracy of "virtue and talents." Still, this does not stop curiosity about whether someone with Lincoln's blood in his veins walks the earth. The final word probably belongs to the Southerner who is one of Timothy Lincoln Beckwith's legal representatives. When he was asked recently whether Timothy was the blood heir of Abraham Lincoln, he at first said "Yes." Then, after closely rereading his files, he became more tentative, acknowledging that the secret financial settlement need not establish paternity: "I concede it. He may or may not be the descendant of Abraham Lincoln. But he's got a promising future and he's a fine young man." ♦

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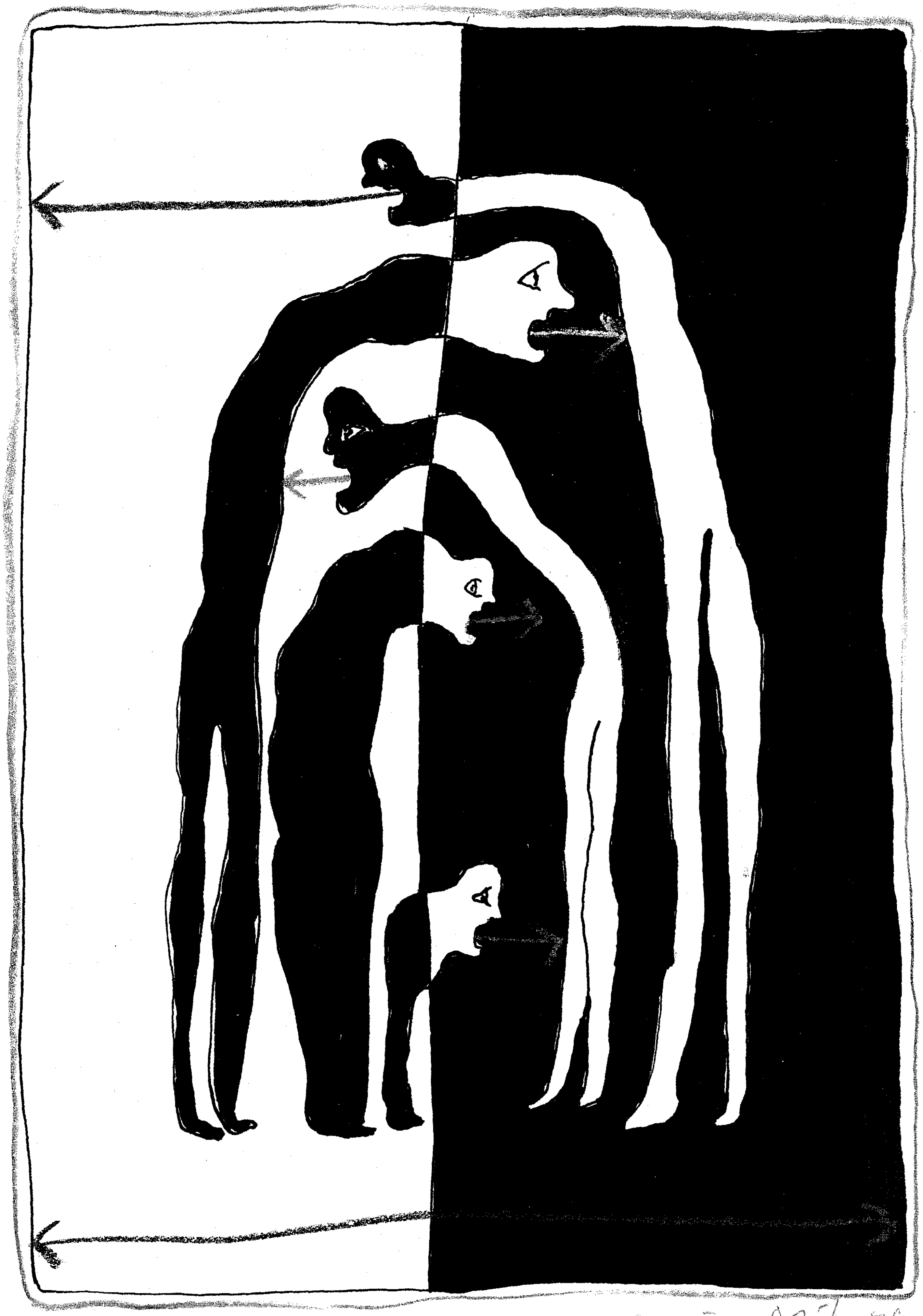


REFLECTIONS

THE OTHER AND THE ALMOST THE SAME

The furor over the rhetoric of Farrakhanism is the latest episode in twenty-five years of perceived discord between America's blacks and America's Jews. What is the argument between sometime allies really about? The beginnings of an answer may lie in a discourse left behind by a hero of the French Resistance.

BY PAUL BERMAN

THE striking thing was the intensity. Khalid Abdul Muhammad, the "Representative" and "National Assistant" of Minister Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, arrived at Kean College, in Union, New Jersey, on November 29, 1993, and rays of zeal and hatred beamed from his mouth. His topic was a book published by the Nation of Islam called "The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews." The National Assistant said that the Jews were "impostor Jews"—demonic liars who rejected Jesus. He said to the Jews, "Jesus was right. You're nothing but liars. The Book of Revelations is right. You're from the synagogue of Satan."

Muhammad outlined a Jewish conspiracy over the millennia. The Jews crucified Jesus. They dispossessed the Palestinians. They exploited the Germans: "Everybody always talk about Hitler exterminating six million Jews. But don't nobody ever ask what did they do to Hitler. . . . They went in there, in Germany, the way they do everywhere they go, and they supplanted, they usurped. . . . They had undermined the very fabric of the society." In the United States, they took control of the Federal Reserve and the White House. And they persecuted the blacks. They dominated the slave trade. They conspired against such great black leaders as Jesus, Marcus Garvey, and, today, Farrakhan. They participated in the civil-rights movement in order to exploit the blacks. They used Hollywood against the blacks. The Jews and the Arab slumlords are "sucking our blood in the black community." The Jews support apartheid. They "raped black women," he said. "What the Jews did. What they did against Nat Turner. It's all in here"—in "The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews."

EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

But the worst is their lie—this lie of the Jews, which is, in a sense, their essence. The Jews—"the hook-nosed, bagel-eatin', lox-eatin' " Jews—are not in fact Jews. Muhammad addressed his black audience: "For you are the true Jew. You are the true Hebrew. You are the true ones who are in line with Bible prophecy and scripture, so teaches the Most Honorable Elijah Muhammad and the Honorable Minister Louis Farrakhan."

The speech was venomous but not inarticulate. It outlined a coherent theological interpretation of black suffering: blacks as the people of God against whom the synagogue of Satan has conspired. It was the kind of speech that, with that same language about bloodsucking and the Crucifixion, Crusaders might have given in 1095 A.D., on their way to slaughter the Jews in the ghettos of Europe. The audience at Kean College cheered—though a lone, brave black student, when given the chance to ask a question, politely but firmly likened the speech to Hitlerism.

Then came the public response. On the Op-Ed page of the *Times*, A. M. Rosenthal banged his fist and, along with him, Roger Wilkins and Bob Herbert. The famous ad that was placed by the Anti-Defamation League—the ad that quoted Muhammad's speech below the words "You Decide"—filled an entire page in the *Times* and ran in other papers, too.

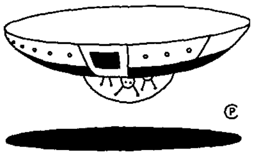
The Senate voted 97–0 to condemn the Kean College speech. The Congressional Black Caucus, having recently announced a "covenant" with Minister Farrakhan, had reason to be embarrassed, and the whole weight of the black political establishment seemed to fall on Farrakhan as a result. Jesse Jackson and then a variety of other political leaders denounced anti-Semitism and called on Farrakhan to act. Farrakhan conferred with Representative Kweisi Mfume, the chairman of the Black Caucus, and then summoned a press conference and demoted Muhammad and chastised him, and praised his "truths." And once again rays of hysteria and hatred beamed outward to the world, this time on CNN.

Farrakhan held up with approval "The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews." He said that "Talmudic scholars" had caused blacks to suffer "the mental anguish of believing that we are black because of some divine curse." He outdid even his own National Assistant by saying that seventy-five per cent of the black slaves in the Old South were owned by . . . Jews! He was raving—our American Zhirinovsky—which did not prevent the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from declaring itself "satisfied" with Farrakhan's statement. The N.A.A.C.P.'s director of communications said the part about slaveowners in the South "may have exaggerated the historical fact," but that it is "a matter for academics to debate."

The counterresponse was another full-page ad in the *Times*, this time placed by People for the American Way. There was shouting on the television talk shows and consternation at the colleges where Farrakhan's National Assistant had been scheduled to speak. Then came another counterresponse: Does the world get upset every time some white person unleashes a racist remark about blacks? There was the case of the Jewish comedian Jackie Mason, who managed to make slurs sound funny. There was the argument that demanding a denunciation of anti-Semitism from every black leader in sight was deeply unfair, and that a controversy that had begun with anti-Semitism had turned—so *Time* argued—into "just another kind of bigotry"; namely, anti-black racism. To which, in yet another counterresponse, A. M. Rosenthal replied— But why go on?

The intensity was startling, but nothing was new. The same sparks and flames have been shooting upward every few years for more than a quarter of a century. The anger and the arguments were no different during the 1968 schoolteachers' strike in New York City, or in 1979, when Andrew Young left Jimmy Carter's Administration. The intensity was the same in 1984, when Jesse Jackson made his first run for the Presidency and employed Farrakhan's military-looking Fruit of Islam as his personal bodyguards and, that time, pointedly declined to repudiate Farrakhan and instead complained about Jewish persecution. It was the same in Crown Heights in 1991, and again in 1992, after the failure to convict anyone for the murder of a man who had been killed by a mob yelling "Get the Jew!"

Yet during all those years what, exactly, has the argument been about—apart from the words themselves? Have the Jews and the blacks been fighting all this time over political spoils? Not especially. Over economic interests? Some people think so, but economic competition between blacks and Jews is strictly marginal. Has it been a war over neighborhoods? Sometimes, but not consistently. Is it a war between parties, Republicans and Democrats? Or between liberalism and conservatism? Not even that, for at the end of the day the blacks and the Jews have trooped off to the polls and in one national election after another they have, more often than not, voted for the same candidates. So what is it—this fire that burns without logs and never goes out?



ONE of Freud's earliest French translators was a man named Jankélévitch, whose son, Vladimir, became a hero in the French Resistance during the Second World War, then went on to a professor's career at the Sorbonne, where he was much loved by his students for his white mane and his philosophy of music. And when Vladimir Jankélévitch died, in 1985, he left behind for posthumous publication some Q. & A. interviews, which caused a shock. The interviews were about courage and hatred. The old professor reminisced about the war against the Nazis. He remembered Jean-Paul Sartre and other famous thinkers from his own generation in France, and he said that in the face of Nazism those very great philosophers had been malingerers and opportunists and had afterward made a career of their undeserved reputation for bravery. He recalled some anti-Semitism within the Resistance, which was a bitter memory for a Jew like him. He forgave nothing. He despaired. In a thousand years, he predicted, people would still be muttering "Dirty Jew." He offered a few philosophical observations, vaguely psychoanalytic in style, as befitted his father's son. He wondered why certain populations feel so strongly about one another. Why so much irrational passion, nationality against nationality? And he proposed an explanation.

Hatred between peoples comes in two varieties, he said. Racism—this is a truism—is a hatred you might feel for people who are different from you: for "the other." But the second kind of hatred is something you might feel for people who, compared with you, are neither "other" nor "brother." It is hatred for "the almost the same." In Jankélévitch's theory, relations with the other tend to be chilly—which doesn't make the hatred any less murderous, given the wrong circumstances. But relations between people who are almost the same tend to be highly charged. He invoked a passage in "Moses and Monotheism" in which Freud observes that "racial intolerance finds stronger expression, strange to say, in regard to small differences than to fundamental ones."

Jankélévitch pointed to the Dutch and the Belgians, who have everything in common and hate each other zealously—at least, sometimes they do. If the old professor had lived a few more years, he would certainly have pointed to the mass insanity in the former Yugoslavia, where the warring groups resemble one another so closely that most of us in the world beyond the Balkans cannot detect any differences at all. Why do tensions between people who are almost the same heat up into uncontrollable hatred? It is a matter of self-preservation.

To the person whose resemblance to you is close, yet who is not really your double, you might easily end up saying, "You are almost like me. The similarity between us is so plain that in the eyes of the world you are my brother. But, to speak honestly, you are not my brother. My identity, in relation to you, consists precisely of the ways in which I am different from you. Yet the more you resemble me the harder it is for anyone to see those crucial differences. Our resemblance threatens to obliterate everything that is special about me. So you are my false brother. I have no alternative but to hate you, because by working up a rage against you I am defending everything that is unique about me."

Since emotional relations fall under the star of irrationality, people who are almost the same might flip-flop into loving one another, bedazzled by their wonderful point of commonality. Or they might sink into confusion about the intensity of their feelings. "When you are in a state of passion, you don't know if you love or if you hate, like spouses who can neither live together nor live apart," Jankélévitch said.

Does anything in that analysis apply to the predicament of blacks and Jews in America? Not on the face of things. The American Jews and the African-Americans have never looked or sounded alike, and the difference in economic conditions has become more pronounced since the days of bedbug-Jewish-tenement poverty. As for the shared history of having someone's boot press on their vulnerable necks, this experience has taken such different forms for blacks and for Jews as to be barely comparable. Any important element of Jewish-and-black almost the sameness, if it existed at all, would have to lie in the zone of the invisible, which is to say the psychological, where all is murk.

Still, I think a fateful trace of such an element does exist, and can even be described, if only vaguely. Many populations have suffered catastrophic defeats; but not all defeats have the same result. The French, having been conquered by the Germans in the Second World War, were subjected to every terrible thing that Jankélévitch and his Resistance comrades worked to destroy; but, even so, the French could think back on their golden centuries of glory, and on that basis they could picture a future of renewed freedom and national self-confidence—maybe a bit chastened.

But there is a second kind of defeat from which you don't really bounce back. The calamity lasts too long; it is overwhelming. People who have undergone that second kind of experience can no longer remember a previous state of healthy self-confidence, except, maybe, in versions that are mythological or religious; and their lack of pleasant secular memories is matched by a lack of any place on earth they can confidently regard as uniquely theirs; and their lack of geography is matched by an almost physical discomfort with their own bodies. Instead of a happy history or a home or a comfortable feeling about themselves, they carry around a memory of their own catastrophe—their "enemy-memory," in Shelby Steele's phrase. They look back and they shudder, and nothing is to be done about it. They might wish sometimes that the old injuries would fade and leave them in peace. But, in another mood, they might discover a treasure in that old frightening enemy-memory of theirs, a spur to all sorts of inventiveness, maybe to hyper-creativity or super-originality—which makes giving up the enemy-memory all the more difficult to do.

CARE FOR A JOG AROUND THE PARK, SID?

INTERACTIVE FOOTWEAR

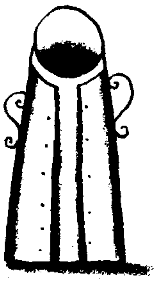
Anyone who wants to see an example of that plight in Europe today can wander into the main squares of the cities of Central Europe and contemplate the shabby-looking Gypsies. The majority populations passing on the sidewalk treat the Gypsies with contempt, and the Gypsies glower and skulk and are frightening in return. Let's say a political miracle took place and the oppressed Gypsies suddenly basked in the same rights and esteem as the majority populations, and the doors of opportunity flew open, and the days of Gypsy oppression were over. Just how quickly would the remembered accusations of their enemies stop ringing in Gypsies' ears?

Steele, in his book "The Content of Our Character," reminds us of how much harm those old memories can do—how they can leave people trapped forever in the worst moments of a bygone past, like someone huddling in an air-raid shelter long after the real-life planes have gone away. Yet if you think about the Gypsies it's easy to imagine that the ancient wounds have long ago inscribed themselves in the collective character, and around those wounds have grown all kinds of idiosyncrasies and compensatory works of originality—in music and dance, for instance, just to cite what all the world acknowledged long ago as expressions of a wholly admirable Gypsy genius. Why would the Gypsies want to abandon that? Obviously, the sound and healthy thing would be to adapt their enemy-memory to purposes that are strictly constructive, and to find a way to rid themselves of the hangdog look and the outlaw trades, as the Gypsies have done in the more enlightened democratic countries. But we can suppose that the Gypsies' room for maneuver is not unlimited—unless they want to stop being Gypsies altogether, which is inconceivable.

In the case of the American Jews, a miracle did take place merely by the act of their fleeing from the Old World to the New. The era when superstitious Christians peered into the European ghettos and interpreted the poverty and the stooped Jewish shoulders and the pasty complexions as signs of divine guilt for the long-ago murder of Jesus—this era, for American Jews, slips into the past at a rate that has come to seem positively amusing. "What is the difference between the I.L.G.W.U."—the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union—"and the American Psychiatric Association?" Alfred Kazin once asked. And answered, "One generation." Yet such is the enemy-memory that both the good and the bad in American society keep the last sparks of remembrance from going out. The styles of Jewish New World success follow patterns that were established in the Old World ghettos, and the successes themselves are fated now and then to call up, out of the creepier depths of Christian civilization, the old paranoid accusations about conspiracies and evil.

Even the fat-and-happiest of American Jews has to shudder at the spectacle, which is always taking place, of some eminent person, not only spokesmen of the Nation of Islam, standing up to give the ancient libels a fresh new airing. Then there is the news about the surviving Jewish communities in the Slavic and Muslim worlds and elsewhere, which is never exactly designed to calm American Jewish nerves. Not that many years ago, a large, previously unknown Jewish tribe was discovered to be living in Ethiopia. Need it be added that the tribe was on the brink of starving to death? And between the memories of the past and what can be seen of the Jewish present outside the happy circle of Western democracy the predicament of the American Jews becomes ever more anomalous.

For the driveway may be long and circular, and the living-room carpet may be thick, but the enemy-memory does not fade—except among the handful of Jews who choose to escape Jewishness altogether. And from the perspective of that memory to prattle on about kinship between American Jewry and African-Americans seems not so outlandish after all. For anyone can see that, if the Gypsies are a tragic people and the Jews are another, the African-Americans are still another: marked by spectacular defeats; marked, too, by continuing accusations about other than fully human qualities; marked, even—and here the African-American conundrum is classic—by the compensatory feats of supreme cultural brilliance, which all the world has had to acknowledge, and which make the sufferings and the successes almost inextricable. And the whole phenomenon is, from the perspective of Jewish memory, all too familiar.



IT'S true that to detect invisible similarities you have to peer through a lens capable of revealing them. In a slightly sentimental mood, some American Jews like to imagine that Judaism itself is their lens. That seems to me a dubious claim. If Judaism per se had any such power of insight, there would be two or three hundred years of black-Jewish alliances in the United States by now. But history—real history, not the conspiracy fiend's version—shows nothing of the sort.

During slavery times—when Jews counted for half of one per cent, or even less, of the American population—a small number of Jews participated in the slave trade, along with vastly larger numbers of Christians and Muslims; and a small number of other Jews participated in the abolitionist movement; and the Jews failed to distinguish themselves either as slavers or as anti-slavers.

Alternatively, it is sometimes said that the European Holocaust is the Jewish lens—though the Holocaust explanation stumbles over the same problem of historical dates. Probably the first important moment in the black-Jewish alliance was the founding of the N.A.A.C.P., in 1909, long before the Nazi era in Europe. Yet that date—not the exact year but the turn-of-the-century era—does point, I think, to the series of ideas and sentiments that finally allowed a large number of Jews to notice similarities between themselves and the blacks.

No one can feel a boot on the neck for long without dreaming of removing it; but only after the American and the French Revolutions did the Old World Jews have the chance to dream along lines of real-life practicality. The Old World Jews had been oppressed by superstition and bigotry, by Christian and Muslim desires to organize society according to religious principles, and by the feudal idea that dynastic landowners (therefore not the homeless Jews) should dominate society. So the new political alternative promoted rationalism and education—against prejudice and superstition. It promised democratic, secular sovereignty—against theocratic domination. And it promised individual rights, equal for all, to be enforced by law—against an exclusively religious or ethnic vision of society.

Enlightenment liberalism was the new idea, and it sliced neatly through the knotty complication of being an unloved minority in a majoritarian world. For the basic unit in the liberal idea was not the exclusive group but the individual person, which opened to the Jews the appealing possibility of taking their place at last as members of a self-selected majority; namely, the grand, all-embracing majority of free and equal individuals. The French Revolution brought these ideas into the open air, and the French and German Jews took them up, and the ideas began a steady eastward push into regions where Jews were more numerous and prejudices more ferocious. The stronger the prejudices and the larger the Jewish population, the more ardent was the enthusiasm with which the new ideas were embraced, until by the time the emancipatory message finally arrived in darkest Poland and the czarist empire it was received almost in the spirit of a religious conversion.

It was the late nineteenth century by then, which was precisely when the mass emigration of Eastern European Jews got under way. Thus America's Jewish population grew in numbers and in poverty but also in ardor. And this new ardor for an emancipatory liberal vision of a better society now became, circa 1909, the lens through which some of the American Jews began to notice those oddest of their new fellow-citizens, the ones with no rights in the land of rights, the victims of majority hatred and outrageous prejudices, their fellows in tragedy: the blacks.

The origin of the Jewish attitude in liberal philosophy accounts, I think, for several of the quirks and oddities of the black-Jewish alliance that now began, very slowly, to emerge. The sympathy for blacks that certain Jews began to feel was not, by and large, a product of personal contact or cultural affinity—except, maybe, in the racially integrated bohemia of jazz and a few other places. The Jews who typically came in contact with blacks during the early and middle twentieth century—the old-time Southern Jews and, around the country, the Jewish employers of black workers, the not very rich Jewish housewives who hired black housekeepers and were famous for a lack of genteel courtesy, the landlords and the storekeepers who lingered in Northern Jewish neighborhoods after black populations had replaced the Jews—might feel no particular sympathy for the African-American cause. They might even be a little hostile, as a result of irritating face-to-face encounters or in conformity with mainstream American culture. Richard Wright drew quite a few Jewish portraits from the nineteen-twenties and thirties in his autobiography, "Black Boy," and the good, the bad, and the ugly were all represented.

When the Jews did sympathize, it was mostly as a result of abstract political reflection, and the people who indulged in the abstract reflection were not always in a rush to proclaim their own Jewishness. The emancipatory liberalism of the American Jews took an infinity of forms in the twentieth century, and only some of these movements flew a Jewish flag. Many Jews were more likely to proclaim a doctrine of purer universalism and to relegate Jewishness to the sphere of private life, or perhaps to the sphere of things to be abolished someday, along with every other threat to village atheism. From the perspective of people with the universalist idea, humanism and liberalism, not what they conceived of as Jewishness, brought them to the cause of African America. There is an old and slightly peculiar Jewish custom of rebelling against Jewishness by identifying with the most marginal of all possible groups, so as to rebel and still not assimilate into the mainstream; and this, too, played its part in attracting Jews to the black cause.

A black person who judged from his own experience with Jewish storekeepers and with abstractly motivated civil-rights supporters who didn't call themselves Jews might easily suppose that Jewish support for black causes was, even in the mid-century heyday of the black-Jewish alliance, either spotty in the extreme or mostly a matter of élite arrangements by a handful of lawyers—and, in either case, not a large and popular tendency. That was how Jewish support did, in fact, begin. The participation of a few Jews in helping to organize the N.A.A.C.P., the devotion of some Jewish philanthropies to black education (which by the nineteen-thirties was benefitting up to forty per cent of Southern black schoolchildren), the fraternal relations beginning in the nineteen-twenties between some top lawyers of the American Jewish Committee and of the N.A.A.C.P.—those were important steps, but they were achieved by only a handful of people.

Support for black causes from the Socialist Party and its offshoots, during the years when Socialism enjoyed a lot of popularity among poor immigrant Jews, had a bit more sidewalk visibility. Still, Socialist friendliness to the black cause had its ups and downs. As for the Communists, their own support for black causes, eager and important though it proved to be, was no end of peculiar. Even to mention Communism among the currents of Jewish emancipatory liberalism may seem odd—except that, of course, a percentage of American Jews did, in the confusions of the Great Depression, turn to Communism out of the same impulses that led a larger percentage to turn to movements that were democratic. And if, out of the Socialist and the Communist movements, a genuine feeling for racial egalitarianism did emerge, and managed to survive the collapse of both parties into tiny sects, such that quite a few of the white liberal volunteers in the nineteen-fifties and sixties heyday of the civil-rights movement were actually Jews with backgrounds in the left-wing parties—even so, quirks and inconsistencies survived as well.

What were some of these peculiarities? Sometimes a Jewish snobbism played a part. One handsome check to the N.A.A.C.P. and a proper snob could look down forever on his ordinary American neighbors. It was possible to support black causes out of feelings that had more to do with Jewish origins than with black realities—out of a need to justify a bristly militant liberalism that no longer seemed to make much sense in relation to American Jewish causes.

The confusing quality of feeling oneself oppressed and poor yet anomalously burdened with prosperity sometimes led the more addled grandchildren of Polish and Russian peddler Jews to stand up and announce a support for blacks on the basis of a largely imagined Jewish guilt. Jewish cynics who never did express much interest in black causes looked at this heap of contradictory impulses and were beside themselves with scorn. How sappy were the Jewish liberals, how softhearted and daft!

Yet, for all these many twists and inconsistencies (and I could go on listing them, in a spirit of ethnic masochism), some aspect of that sympathy for black causes was authentic, and the aspect went on swelling, until the sentiments that had begun as spotty and unreliable and peculiar had become by the forties and fifties a genuine popular enthusiasm among the large percentage of American Jews who considered themselves liberals. It was almost as if to be Jewish and liberal were, by definition, to fly a flag for black America—as if to embark on dangerous Freedom Rides into the Deep South were to live out a supremely Jewish sense of moral action. Jews accounted for almost two-thirds of the white volunteers who went south for Freedom Summer, in 1964. Among the people who lacked that kind of physical courage, there was always the possibility of contributing money. Between half and three-quarters of the money raised by the civil-rights organizations at the height of the movement came from Jewish contributors, which is striking, considering that Jews made up by then less than three per cent of the American population.

It was a matter of one population's recognizing another. The liberal Jew said to the black, in effect, "Among all the elements of American society, it is you who are most like me. The similarity between us is so plain that in my own eyes, if not in the eyes of the world, you are my brother. Slavery is Nazism; lynchings are pogroms; Jim Crow is czarist anti-Semitism, American style; Mississippi is Poland; bigotry is bigotry. I am with you! I understand your plight. I understand how it is a worse plight than most people can imagine. I understand it because of who I am, and who I am is someone who fights on behalf of people like you."

There was passion in that statement. And if some kernel of practical self-interest lurked as well—if the higher-ups in the Jewish establishment always knew that people with sheets over their heads were no friends of Jewry, either, and blacks were a good ally to have—that merely shows that idealism and self-interest need not be opposites, in spite of a cheap temptation to assume that they must be. Anyway, the Jewish young people who took up civil-rights activism

NO SMOKING
RYE, N.Y.

were not thinking of Jewish conditions. They were thinking of justice.

AND the differences between the African-Americans and the American Jews? The ones that matter, from a Jankélévitchian perspective, are not the big, obvious disparities but the little motes of disagreement, which, because they burrow within the similarities, are hardest to see. For, in dreaming of a better world, the African-Americans likewise went tit for tat against their own oppression, and, since the horrors inflicted on the blacks resembled in many respects the horrors that had historically been inflicted on the Jews, the proposed black political alternatives naturally bore a resemblance to the liberalism of the Jews. But, just as the sufferings of the blacks were not, in fact, exactly those of the Jews, neither could the proposed alternatives be the same.

African-American political thinking in the twentieth century is usually described as a series of mighty antinomies. Booker T. Washington stands against W. E. B. Du Bois, and Martin Luther King, Jr., against Malcolm X—which is interpreted to mean self-improvement versus the demand for rights, integration versus separatism, nonviolent protest versus what Malcolm coyly described as non-nonviolence. But deeper than all these, I think, lies a still mightier antinomy of African-American political life, which is the conflict between emancipatory liberalism and the philosophy of global anti-imperialism, or Third Worldism.

By black emancipatory liberalism I mean the ideas of democratic socialists like A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, jurists like Thurgood Marshall, Christian activists like King—all of whom demanded that America live up to its liberal promise. The black liberals were always the people who won the biggest victories for African-Americans, and they were always the people who maintained the closest relations with the Jewish (and non-Jewish) liberals, fellow-thinker to fellow-thinker. Yet those same blacks always had to contend with a special American complexity, unlike anything in the experience of their Jewish counterparts. The Jews turned to liberalism as the negation of every feudal and theocratic thing that had historically kept them down. But the African-Americans had to struggle against a society that was itself fundamentally liberal—except in connection with them.

Out-and-out racism was always their main enemy, but racism in the land of Jefferson the slaveowner comes dressed as often as not in a cloak of pieties. Slave masters didn't necessarily defend bondage as such; they defended the democracy of states' rights. Segregationists didn't necessarily defend Jim Crow as such; they defended an individual's right to choose his own associates. And so the black liberals faced a horrendous difficulty. Liberalism in America ought in principle to have offered the blacks the same simple and cheering message that it always offered the Jews. But since in America the liberal words kept slipping away from their own obvious meaning the black liberals were condemned to perform a task of excruciating subtlety: To bang the lectern in a demand for liberal justice while at the same time drawing surgical distinctions between true liberalism and the shoddy variant that was the African-Americans' historic foe. To invoke what Jefferson *should* have said, and distinguish it from what he did say. To thunder while dissecting: a nearly impossible thing to do.

Third Worldism was simpler in every way. It conveyed a good and encouraging message without having to make any delicate distinctions between the true and the shoddy. The message said, "You, the African-Americans, are hopelessly outnumbered within the United States, and this unfortunate reality cannot be wished away by a lot of talk about liberalism and rights. But on a world scale you are no minority at all. The news for you is therefore encouraging. You are many, not few; strong, not weak; time will right your wrongs!"

It's true that for many years Third Worldist ideas among African-Americans were mostly a cultural concept, with little prospect of becoming practical. Yet, just as the politics of Jewish America respond to developments abroad, so do the politics of African America, and, beginning with the anticolonial revolutions after the Second World War, Third Worldism's practicality started to look more convincing.

Were Third Worldism and liberalism at odds with each other? You could look to the anticolonial revolution as a way to achieve the liberal idea of democracy and universal individual rights, and be a liberal and a Third Worldist both. The skinny personage of Mahatma Gandhi incarnated the possibility. Yet liberalism and Third Worldism were not the same. Liberal movements in the Third World could stand up to European imperialism, but so could antiliberal movements. For the basic unit of the Third Worldist idea was not the individual but the group. It was the oppressed national entity, maybe the oppressed race. Dictators cannot fight for individual rights except by committing suicide, but they can fight splendidly on behalf of the group.

Anticolonialism scored its victories around the world in the nineteen-forties and fifties and sixties, and the Third Worldist inspiration did slip from the liberal to the authoritarian. Instead of Gandhi, there was Nasser; instead of individual rights, there were national rights. And, with these shifts going on in the Third World movement, the balance of argument at home in the United States between the black liberals and the black Third Worldists began to shift as well. In 1963, Bayard Rustin stood sufficiently central to African-American politics to serve as chief organizer of that year's historic March on Washington, but by the end of the decade the same person was deemed insufficiently black. And, whatever impact these developments had on African-American circumstances as a whole, the effect on black-Jewish relations was extreme.

There was the matter of affirmative action, which emerged as a practical issue in the middle nineteen-seventies. The civil-rights organizations came out in favor of affirmative action in order to give reality to the otherwise empty phrases about political equality which had just been adopted as national law—to forestall, in short, the traditional racial hypocrisy of American liberalism. But affirmative action was philosophically ambiguous. It could be supported on a pragmatic ground as a straightforward bit of social engineering, New Deal style. Or it could be interpreted to mean that people should be viewed primarily as members of groups, not as individuals.

The pragmatic interpretation ought to have been acceptable to the pure lib-

EASEL • BY BENOÎT VAN INNIS

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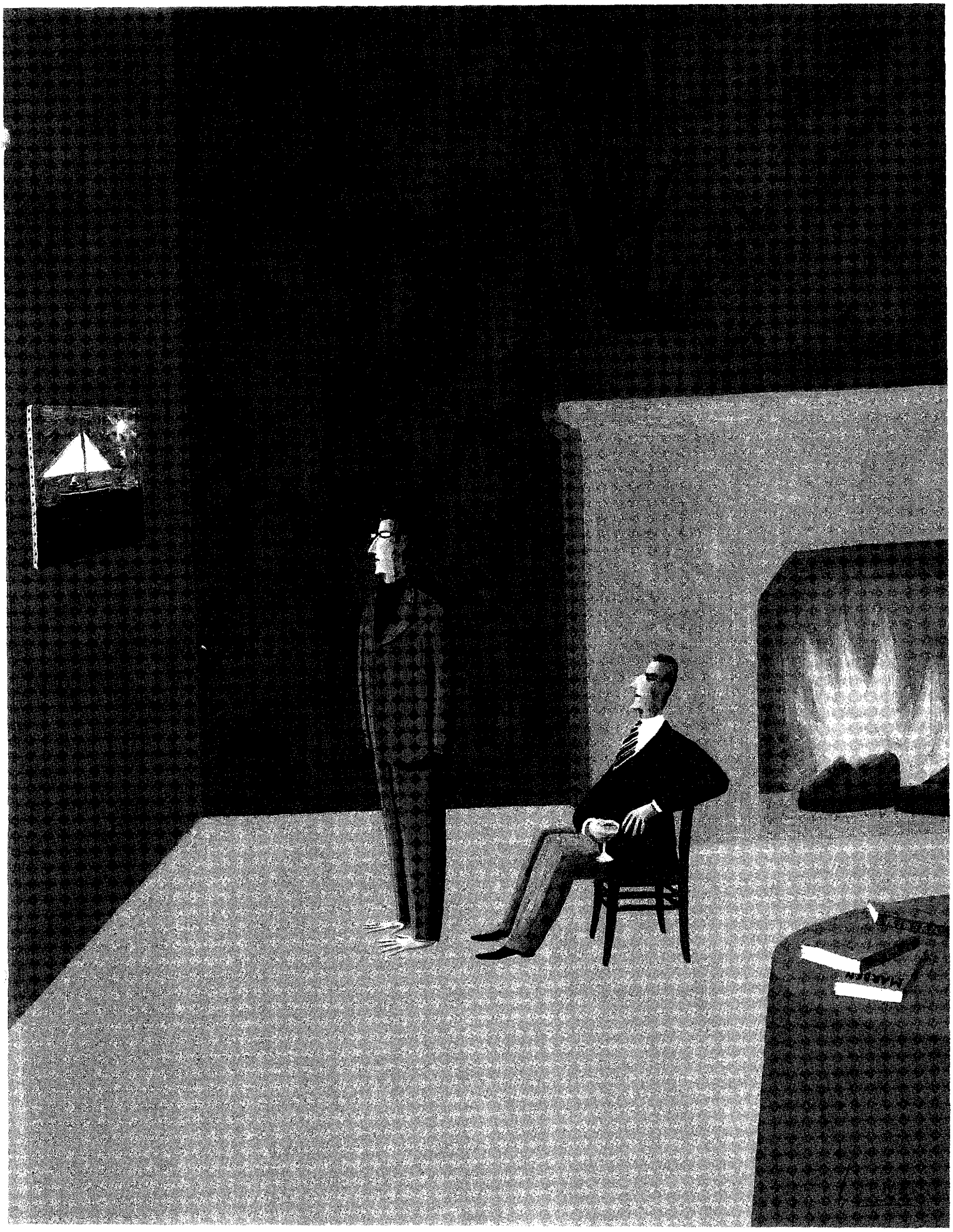
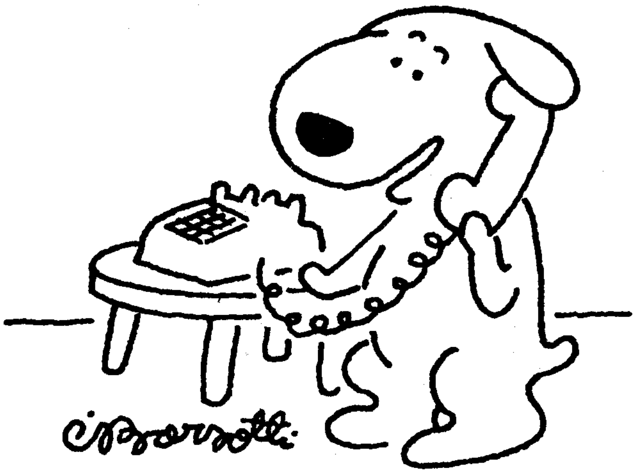




"Wow, that sounds like a hell of an investment to me!"

• •

erals, Jewish or otherwise. The second interpretation challenged liberalism at its core. But, because the ambiguity never did get cleared up, black activists could go on viewing the program as merely the proper next step for civil rights, regardless of the philosophical intricacies, and could interpret the opposition to affirmative action on the part of certain (not all) leading Jewish groups as a sudden betrayal of the black cause. And the Jewish opponents of affirmative action could view the whole idea as a surprising and dangerous betrayal of liberalism. Affirmative action posed, at least in potential, a threat to all the civil-rights achievements that had struck down the right to discriminate against Jews—most notably, the historic anti-Jewish quotas in the universities. So there was a lot of bad blood over affirmative action. And when the second great point of disagreement between a large number of blacks and Jews emerged—the argument over Zionism and the Palestinians—the bad blood turned worse.

In the early years after the Second World War, it was common to regard Israel as a mosquito version of the mammoth state created by Gandhi, distinguished by its democratic ideals and the previously miserable condition of its now liberated population. But, whereas India maintained its prestige, Israel was gradually redefined, within the ranks of the Third World movement, as a European-settler colony.

African-Americans played no part in working up this new, unattractive image of Israel, and in the early years they displayed little interest in it, either. But in the nineteen-sixties the new image of Israel came to be accepted by revolutionaries around the world, and the American blacks who wanted to adhere to the Third Worldist idea really had no alternative but to accept at least some part of that view of Israel, and this was easy enough to do. In the rhetoric of Third World revolution, the African-Americans figured among European imperialism's earliest victims, and the Palestinians among the latest. It was sometimes believed that Palestinian skin tone was darker than that of the Israeli Jews, as if in pigmental confirmation of the proposed new link between Palestinians and African-Americans. And if any further sign of brotherhood between Palestinians and African-Americans was needed there was the all too clear reality that, as the years wore on and the Arab boycott against Israel took hold, the old warm relations between Israel and the newly independent countries of black Africa turned chilly, and one of the few African nations with which Israel did succeed in maintaining friendly exchanges was, of all unappealing countries, the land of apartheid. In these ways, the link between Palestinians and African-Americans came to seem natural, not doctrinal.

The African-American feeling of identification with the Palestinians cast a shadow over Jewish political motives. In Third Worldist eyes, any kind of principled or idealistic position on the Middle East had to mean support for the Palestinians against Israel. Yet here were the same American Jews who claimed to support African-American civil rights supporting Israel, too—quite as if the Jewish liberals were simply another version of the old American racial hypocrite. Might not the Jewish support for black causes, given its seeming lack of idealism, conceal a deeper exploitation of blacks—or, if not exactly an exploitation, at least an appropriation of the black cause for other uses?

And, with one thing and another, a reasonable black person who began by subscribing to even the smallest portion of the Third Worldist logic could follow a chain of plausible analysis and conclude by saying to the liberal Jew, "You look like my brother—in some respects. You, too, have been persecuted and despised—though not much in this country. You have supported my cause—somewhat. But if you were truly an idealist you would show enthusiasm for affirmative action here at home and for the Palestinians abroad—who are, in regard to racist oppression, my real brothers. Since you do not, your motives appear to be self-serving. And by advancing your interests while pretending to stand for the oppressed you are subtly undermining me. My own suffering has gone on for centuries with very little recognition from the world. Yet, whenever I speak up, you drown me out with your talk of Jewish suffering and your endless disquisitions on the benefits that you have bestowed on me. The more you speak about what we have in common, the harder it is for me to be heard. So you are my false brother. No, I don't hate you. But neither do I feel the ardor that you so strangely claim to feel for me. I am merely cool. Let us see coldly what my interests are, and what yours are, and if we happen to agree on some small point—good."

FROM the perspective of Jewish liberalism, the argument over affirmative action was bad enough, but the black impulse to support the Palestinians was astonishing. Like the black Third Worldist, the Jewish liberal pictured his own doctrine as no doctrine at all but as simple reality. There might be much to complain about in Israeli policy. But to see Israel as a European colony and an agent of worldwide racism—no, that was inconceivable.

Imperialist? Israel was the self-defense of a tragic minority struggling to achieve a normal existence. White European?

Jews were fleeing for their lives from hateful old Europe as well as from the Arab world, where Jewish skins were, by the way, not so light. An affliction to the Arabs? Zionism proposed to be the agricultural modernizer of the Middle East. But in the nature of things—so went the liberal-Jewish analysis—when an oppressed minority achieves a bit of power majority populations everywhere will regard the achievement as an outrage to decency. And so it was when the oppressed Jews succeeded in winning for themselves their modest slice of the enormous region that had been ruled for so many centuries with such cruelty by the genuine imperialisms of Christendom and Islam.

The contempt and enmity of the entire world pushed this new Jewish state into some of the ugliness that has always clung to the despised and the persecuted, and upon this ugliness all the bigotries of the ages had pounced, so that Israel in the age of anti-Zionism was now declared to be a kind of conspiracy for evil, just like the persecuted Jews in the past. Such was the liberal Jewish view.

And so the liberal Jews turned to the African-Americans and said, in effect, "Naturally, we, the American Jews, understand that all over the world majority populations and the partisans of privilege will always look with contempt or outrage on Israel. But surely other peoples who are themselves tragic minorities will recognize in Israel their brother and will rally to its cause, and, weak as they may be in practical terms, will do everything they can to insure that Israel does not end up exterminated by its enemies, as could all too easily happen.

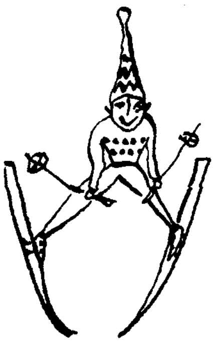
"Surely the African-Americans will understand that Israel is the minority civil-rights movement of the Middle East, and the terrorists and tyrants who oppose it are the majority enemies of justice. Surely the African-Americans will understand how, just as poor whites in the American South are eager to attack the Southern blacks, so are the poor Arabs in the Middle East eager to pounce on the Jews, and one can even sympathize with the poor Arabs, just as one can perhaps sympathize with the poor Southern whites, to a degree. But surely we, the persecuted minorities, can appreciate each other's predicament. Surely the hearts of African-Americans will beat for Israel!"

Those were the thoughts of the liberal Jews. And, of course, Bayard Rustin was not the only black liberal who did view Israel and the Jews in that way. But a sizable portion of black opinion shook its head in dissent.

And at this the Jewish liberal was dumbfounded, and said, in effect, "You, the African-American, look like my brother, because you, too, have been spectacularly oppressed. But when you turn your eyes to the endangered minority population of the Middle East—the Jews—you see with the eyes of a majority oppressor. You are my false brother. And because you look like my brother but are actually my false brother you are undermining me. You are taking away my ability to summon the world's sympathy for the cause of an oppressed people.

"Your own sufferings have given you moral authority, but you are invoking this authority to counter my own. You are making other people think that I, a liberal, am instead merely a Jew, and that Jews are exactly what our enemies have always accused us of being—exploitative and tricky oppressors. You are helping to prepare the moral ground for what may someday turn out to be a new outbreak of anti-Semitic horror in the Middle East. And while you are doing that abroad you are undermining individual rights at home with your new notion of group rights. False brother, you are turning yourself into my enemy."

And now the real slide in relations between blacks and Jews, the avalanche, got under way—from both sides at once. There had always been a strain of folk anti-Semitism in African-American life. There had always been the Christian hostility to Judaism—a hostility that was white, not black, in its Southern origins, yet that blacks could draw on, too. But there was also the unique African-American theology from which Farrakhan's Nation of Islam has taken so many inspirations—the idea that African-Americans are the Hebrews of the Bible, and that Biblical epics of slavery and redemption refer to blacks, not to whites. That was never a weak idea in African-American life. It was a beautiful idea; it was a reading of the Bible as living testimony to the present. How much hope and humanity must have clung to that idea in slavery times!



But, once the argument with the American Jews had begun, that ancient African-American theology blossomed into a conflict of identities beyond anything that Jankélévitch had described. For in the minds of the Nation of Islam, and perhaps among some Christians, too, the black was no longer saying to the Jew, "You appear to be my brother, but you are my false brother." The black was saying, "I am you, and you are an impostor. Your history is mine, not yours; and, insofar as people think that you are you, it is because you have stolen my identity. You are more than an enemy; you are a demon. Only Satan could do what you have done!"

Something about those thoughts was touching, as well as despicable. There was a supreme degree of passion, as in the highest form of love: a feeling of complete identity, except in the form of hatred. And once those feelings were out in the open, and skilled orators were touring the college campuses bringing the message, and the idea was popping up in rap music—once that had happened, there was nothing to keep the wildest theories about the Jews from springing up.

The theories about Jews as a conspiracy to damage blacks via the slave trade and the movies, about evil Jewish doctors who infect blacks with AIDS (this was another theory that the Kean College speaker seemed to defend), about Jewish intentions to miseducate black children through the public-school system—all these gained a visibility they had never before enjoyed. And to combat those theories became, for anyone in the black community except a rigorous and consistent liberal, ever harder to do.

Even the great black majority who felt no hatred at all for Jews had to wonder if the wilder theories were really expressions of bigotry, as the liberals kept insisting. What *is* bigotry, after all, and whose definition should be followed? By a liberal definition, the views of a Farrakhan or a Professor Leonard Jeffries are bizarre and reprehensible. But those same views are not at all bizarre or viewed as reprehensible in the intellectual atmosphere of Middle Eastern anti-Zionism.

Didn't the United Nations itself de-clare that Zionism was in fact racism? So a cloud of Third Worldist confusion settled over these questions. Maybe they were anti-Semitic, maybe not. But no one could doubt that to speak up against them was to break the solid front of black political protest, which some brave souls were always willing to do. But not every soul is brave. Or clear-thinking. And so throughout the nineteen-seventies and eighties the liberal voices within African America grew quieter, and the Third Worldist voices grew louder; and from within the Third Worldist chorus could be heard the tones of old-fashioned prejudice; and prejudice led to prejudice, against Jews or against Asians; and the bigotries got ever more extreme, until a few lone loony voices were hitting the Hitlerian note, and the lone voices were authentically audible.

"He was wickedly great," Farrakhan's National Assistant said about Hitler—which was merely a quotation from Farrakhan himself. And whether that kind of language would excite a vigorous black response was, until just now, hard to predict. For there had been an intellectual collapse. It was the collapse that made someone like Farrakhan's assistant a popular lecturer on the college campuses. It was, in the field of political thought, the equivalent of what had happened socially and culturally to the lower class in the poorest American ghettos: a collapse into self-destruction and dangerousness, into hatred and self-hatred, which the black liberals were, at least for the moment, hard pressed to restrain.

The Jewish version of the downhill slide was not exactly parallel. The growth of Jewish neoconservatism in the seventies and eighties was not itself an example of rightist extremism or of racist demagogy. Yet the Jewish neoconservatives did urge the liberal Jews to give up their liberal sympathies. They endowed the Reagan coalition with a kind of intellectual sophistication that had never figured among the strengths of the Southern California G.O.P. They became, in short, black America's political antagonists, and powerful ones, at that, which no important faction of Jewish politics had been before. They never did win over a Jewish electoral majority. But they whittled away—from "above," let us say—at the old Jewish attitudes that had once done so much to support the African-American cause.

Another kind of whittling occurred from "below." Across the country, the modest neighborhoods of the working-class and lower-middle-class Jews turned out to be, of all the neighborhoods in a given city, some of the only districts that proved halfway receptive to black migration, for reasons that did not exclude the traditional liberalism of the old Jewish working-class movements. So the blacks moved in, and the moment in which they moved was precisely the moment in which, for a thousand reasons having nothing to do with black-Jewish relations, the black lower class entered into its calamitous decline, and the Jewish poor and not so poor, the schoolteachers and the shopkeepers who remained behind, found themselves beset by the violence of the social disaster. And, between the neoconservative criticisms from "above" and the sidewalk experiences from "below," the old liberal ideas underwent the kind of silent evolution in which the words remain the same but the tone of voice turns cold.

Jews who still called themselves liberals ended up obsessing about black street crime, whether the crime statistics were up or down. Every phrase uttered by a black writer or leader on Jewish topics—even when the phrase was intended to be friendly—came to feel like a dagger thrust. A litany of invidious comparison took the place of the older litany of sympathetic comparison. *We* got over our original poverty, went the new Jewish argument, and we took advantage of the public schools and colleges, and we flourished, and we are the cat's meow. Why aren't you? And in these ways the differences between the American Jews and the rest of the white population regarding race began to narrow, even if the narrowing was not expressed at the polls.

It is a little unfair to take the 1991 fighting in Crown Heights as a symbol of the larger dispute. The Lubavitcher Jews of Crown Heights are members of a peculiar sect that never did join in the mass Jewish embrace of liberal ideas, and the blacks of Crown Heights are in large numbers immigrants from the Caribbean with no background in the history of black-and-Jewish alliances in America. Still, a shocking scene is a shocking scene. A murderous black mob dashing through the streets shouting slogans in favor of Hitler is no small thing to contemplate. A mob of Hasidic Jews marching around the neighborhood dressed in the costumes of eighteenth-century Poland, chanting (peacefully—but still) in Yiddish-inflected accents that blacks should go back to Africa: that does make a piquant tableau. The faces above bigotry's most vulnerable necks were howling bigotry's favorite phrases.

It was a Jankélévitchian moment. And, with rage and idiocy awash in the Brooklyn streets, blacks and Jews everywhere in America—not just the crazies or the religious sectarians—could say, as if in chorus, except with fingers pointed at each other's chests, "You *look* like an oppressed minority. But it is I who belong to the true minority. You are yourself part of the oppressive majority. It is I who deserve the sympathy of others. But it is you who receive it. Not only are you oppressing me; you are making it harder for the world to appreciate the cruelty that has historically been done to me. And, because my tragic history is a crucial part of who I am, you are denying me my recognition as a human being. You are turning me into nobody. The war between us is therefore total."

THE first stage of the relation described by Jankélévitch was an acknowledgment of similarity, and the second stage was an acknowledgment that similarity contains a difference, thereby funnelling a broad passion into a narrow spout of rancor. Now we enter a third stage, which turns out to follow Jankélévitch's analysis exactly, except that its causes have more to do with outer events than with inner dynamics.

The revolutions of 1989-91 around the world were liberalism's greatest moment of triumph probably in all history. But triumph meant exhaustion. And these two factors—liberalism and fatigue—are almost guaranteed, as I see it, to transform the black-Jewish relation. Without Soviet backing, the air went out of the Third Worldist revolutionary idea in a matter of months.

The international pressures that made it more or less mandatory for African-Americans, if they wanted to take their place within the Third World revolutionary movement, to endorse—or, at least, abide—the anti-Zionist cause disappeared almost overnight. The evolution in Jesse Jackson's descriptions of Zionism—from "a kind of poisonous weed" (in a speech to an American Palestinian group in 1980) to an estimable "liberation movement" (in a speech to the World Jewish Congress in 1992)—no doubt reflected a personal development; but man and Zeitgeist have always been intertwined in the person of Jesse Jackson. And, with Third Worldism in defeat, the radical criticism of liberalism, not just on the question of Israel but on all questions, lost its force.

I don't doubt that outright anti-Semites will keep turning up among black campus lecturers or that the old animosities will linger among the sidewalk booksellers and among some of the less distinguished black-studies departments, or that the chain of influence which descends from anti-Semitic professors through demagogic street activists to the young kids with knives in the poor neighborhoods will still be visible. But there was a time when these things looked like a wave of the future, and that time is past. Already, in the early nineteen-nineties, a new generation of liberal black intellectuals began to make themselves heard. And when the black political leaders stood up in the aftermath of the Kean speech to denounce the anti-Semitism, and even to place a little distance between themselves and the Nation of Islam, the event was historic. It was liberalism's return—a shaky liberalism, perhaps. But even the shakiest liberalism is likely to allow larger numbers of African-Americans to look on their old, frustrating Jewish allies of the past with less anger in the future, if not in every case with warmth.

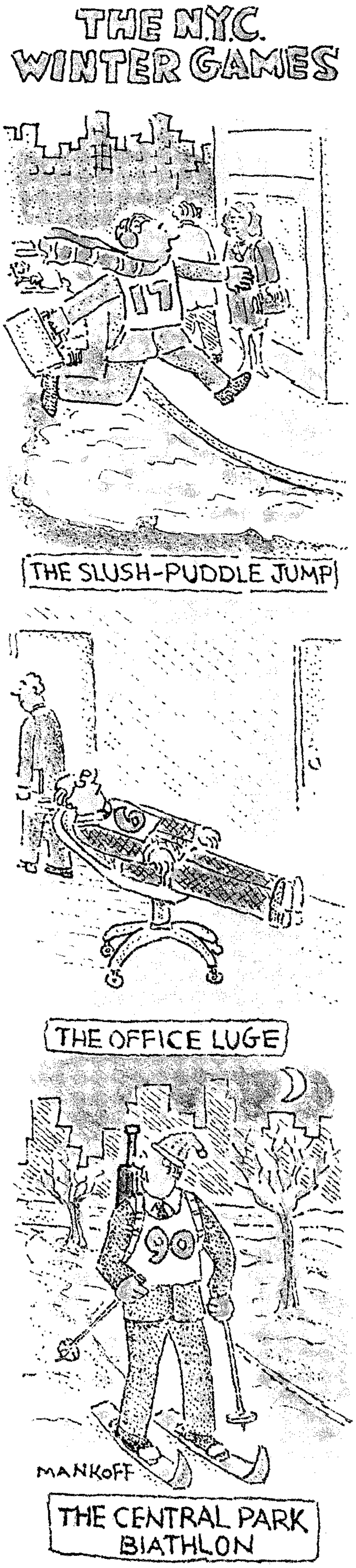
Will liberalism among the American Jews similarly become a little stronger? Many regimes collapsed when the Soviet Union collapsed, and Jewish neoconservatism was among them. But then, among the American Jews, political emotions in the future are likely to remain a little cool. The twentieth century was not only the worst century in the history of the Jews but also, within the Jewish world, one of the most passionate centuries, and the passions have been expended chiefly on projects of emancipatory liberalism, not just for the Jews, that have proved to be less than successful. Socialism as a worldwide movement did not deliver universal emancipation. Communism turned out to be a fiasco in which the Jews themselves ended up prominent among the victims. In the Middle East, Zionism's loftiest dream was obliged to sink to the undreamy level of merely surviving, no matter what the price.

The desire of the Jewish liberals in the United States to perfect American democracy by supporting the cause of African-Americans was just one more among these several universalist efforts, and it ended with some successes but also with a pathetic aspiration that went no further than hoping that anti-Semitism among blacks could be contained. And, in the wintry atmosphere that has followed on these failures, the old-fashioned ideas of emancipatory liberalism are not about to burst into renewed bloom among Jews in America or anywhere else, and the moral grandeur of the Jewish political movements of the twentieth century does not seem likely to be matched in the twenty-first.

What, then, will be the ground for either hostility or fraternity between African-Americans and American Jews in that century? I can guess. The blacks and the Jews will remember their old alliances and their old fights. They will forgive some old injuries, forget none.

But there is a little joke at the end of this story. Judaism allows divorce, and the mainstream black church, in its Protestant denominations, likewise permits it. But the relation between Jews and blacks does not allow divorce. The American Jews and the African-Americans are who they are because of long centuries of a past that can be put to different uses but cannot be overcome. It was the past that made the blacks and the Jews almost the same, and the past has the singular inconvenience of never going away.

Jankélévitch knew this. His idea of almost-the-same populations pictured "spouses who can neither live together nor live apart." That is the situation today. Separate beds, separate rooms; the same house. Love, hatred; a wobbling back and forth from one to the other. A slightly irrational relation, as all emotional relations are irrational. An intensity that never quite evaporates—all of it destined to go on as long as polyglot America goes on. ♦



PROFILE

SPENDER'S LIVES

For more than sixty years, the poet Stephen Spender, now eighty-five, has been a highly visible part of Britain's cultural life. But Spender's recent dispute with the novelist David Leavitt, who has been accused of misappropriating Spender's past, has the literati pondering a familiar question: "Who is Stephen Spender?"

BY IAN HAMILTON

MY first meeting with Stephen Spender was in 1960, when I was president, chief executive, and general mastermind of the Oxford University Poetry Society. Spender had been asked up to Oxford to give a talk, and beforehand he was required to dine with the society's committee. This ritual was always an ordeal for everyone concerned, but the committee (that's to say, a couple of my friends and I) insisted on maintaining it, week in, week out. It was a chance for us to get a free meal out of the society's coffers, but it was also a means of enjoying some lively and informal contact with our visiting celeb. Best of all, it provided us with a rich source of superior chitchat for several months to come: "Well, yes, but when I asked Eliot to clarify that very point, he said nothing. He just sat there."

The week before Spender's visit, we had had dinner with W. H. Auden, and we were now in a position to spin tales of that master's irritability, his gluttonous drink intake, his astonishing complexion: "It's actually much worse close up." The week after, we would be getting Robert Graves. Why these grand figures put themselves to this inconvenience—no fee, no audience to speak of, and a dinner that few of them ever seemed to touch—remains a mystery to me. But it was rare for a poet, however famous, to turn down our invitation. One or two of them, unbelievably, came back for more.

In retrospect, I can see that this was my introduction to the limitless vanity of poets: they'll put up with anything, provided that they get to read their works. But I can also see how repulsive we must have seemed to them. Over dinner, we expected our guests to entertain. Our contribution was languidly interrogative. "So. What are you up to these days?" we would say, or "Were you *very* upset by the reviews of your last book?" And we were determined to be unimpressed. As far as my buddies and I were concerned, these eminents had dragged themselves to Oxford in order to be thought well of by the likes of us. They were afraid of becoming back numbers. They wanted to keep in with the young.

This was certainly the notion we had formed of Stephen Spender. We planned to greet him with a special condescension. In 1960, Spender was renowned as a figure from the past—a poet of the nineteen-thirties—and his work was deeply out of fashion. Indeed, the nineteen-thirties were out of fashion, seen as a tragicomic literary epoch in which poets had absurdly tried, or pretended, to engage with current politics—one in which pimply young toffs had linked arms with muscular proletarians in order to "repel the Fascist threat" when they weren't at Sissington or Garsinghurst for the weekend, sucking up to Bloomsbury grandees. The Homintern, Cyril Connolly had called them—"psychological revolutionaries, people who adopt left-wing political formulas because they hate their fathers or were unhappy at their public schools or insulted at the Customs, or lectured about sex." Someone else had dubbed Spender "the Rupert Brooke of the Depression."

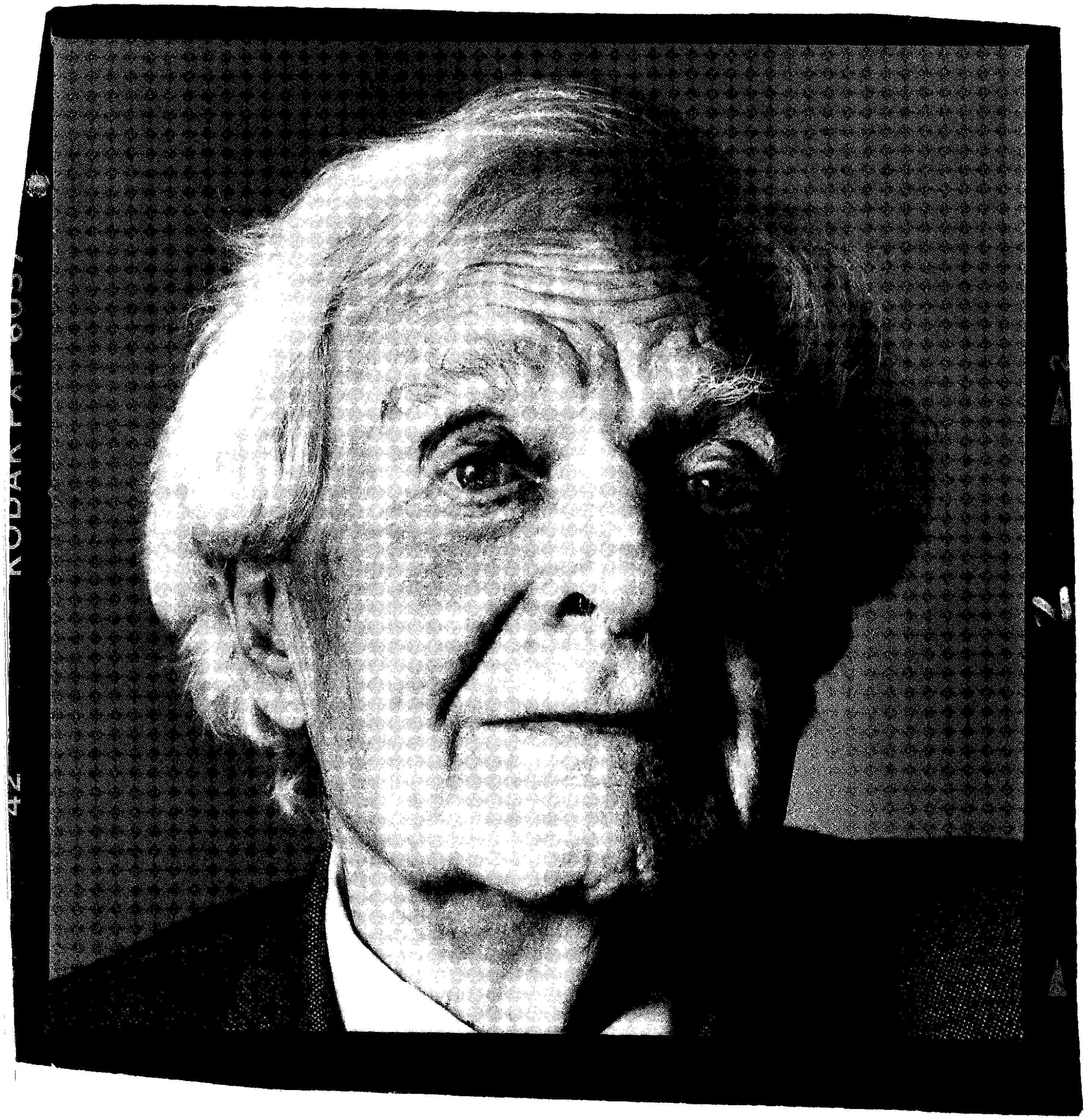
We undergraduates liked to repeat these gibes. Most of us had been told in school that of all the thirties poets Spender was the one whose reputation had been most inflated. He lacked the complexity of Auden, the erudition of Louis MacNeice, the cunning of Cecil Day-Lewis. He was the one who had believed the slogans—"Oh young men oh young comrades"—and, after the war, the one who had recanted most shamefacedly. He was the fairest of fair game. I remember my school's English teacher—an acolyte, I later learned, of F. R. Leavis—reading aloud from Spender's "I think continually of those who were truly great" and substituting for "great" words like "posh" and "rich" and "queer." The same teacher also had a scornful party piece involving Spender's "Pylons, those pillars / Bare like nude, giant girls that have no secret." "Even you lot," he would say, "might draw the line at girls who looked like *that*."

My teacher was in line with current critical opinion. He usually was. The late fifties was a period of skeptical naysaying. It was modish to be cagey, unillusioned. The only brave cause left was the cause of common sense, the only decent political standpoint the refusal to be taken in. "Look what happened in the thirties!" was the common cry. And it was not just political windbaggery that was distrusted. There was suspicion, too, of anything religiose, arty, or intense. "A neutral tone is nowadays preferred," Donald Davie wrote in a mid-fifties poem called "Remembering the 'Thirties." And Thom Gunn—the young poet we nineteen-sixties students most admired—was preaching a doctrine of butch self-reliance:

> I think of all the toughs through history
> And thank heaven they lived, continually.
> I praise the overdogs from Alexander
> To those who would not play with Stephen Spender.

It was better, Gunn said, "To be insensitive, to steel the will, / Than sit irresolute all day at stool / Inside the heart."

Such tough talk was music to our ears. As we waited for Spender in the olde-worlde Oxford pub that served as our bunker, our HQ, we took bets on which beam he would knock his head against. Our guest poet was notoriously



Stephen Spender, photographed by Richard Avedon in London, January 18, 1993.

tall. He tripped over things, we'd read. As it turned out, he negotiated his entrance with discreet aplomb. Almost before we knew it, he was there, stooping toward us with an outstretched hand, and with an oddly mischievous half smile, which seemed to say, "Don't worry. It's entirely *my* fault that I'm six foot three."

He was not at all like the Spender we recalled from the thirties photographs: the open-necked, simpering young zealot just back from the cafés of Vienna and Berlin and about to lurch off to the Spanish Civil War. Nor did his appearance accord with his contemporaries' descriptions: "an immensely tall, shambling boy of nineteen, with a great scarlet poppy-face, wild frizzy hair, and eyes the violent colour of bluebells." This was Christopher Isherwood's description of a fictional character based on Spender (named Stephen Savage) in "Lions and Shadows." Isherwood had been one of Spender's closest friends, and his book was our chief source of thirties knowledge. And John Lehmann, another key associate, had written about Spender's "demoniac look" and his "huge pantomime grin."

We had been half expecting our man to show up in cap and bells, but the Spender who now shook our hands was snowy-haired, and stably benevolent of mien. He looked like the sort of headmaster we had never had, the sort for whom my satirical English teacher would no doubt have uprooted his forelock. The handshake was a trifle limp, but there was no sign of the poppy face. Spender seemed to be sporting a Florida suntan.

When he spoke, it was in a sheepish semi-whisper, eyes averted or downcast. He wanted us to tell him about *us*, about the student literary scene, which magazines we wrote for, which poets we admired. On this last we were sturdily evasive, and although he looked sorrowful, he did not press. At dinner, it was pretty much the same. He encouraged us to have our say, soliciting our opinion of *Encounter*, the magazine he edited in London. *Encounter*, he said, was always on the lookout for new Oxford talent—why didn't we send him some of our unpublished work?

Through all this, Spender's demeanor was impossible to fathom; there was in it a strange fusion of attentiveness and deep preoccupation. Again, the memoirists seemed to have let us down, with their stories of his ludicrous garrulity, his mad compulsion to tell all. John Lehmann called Spender "the most rapidly self-revealing person I had ever met," and Virginia Woolf, after dining with him in the thirties, noted that he "talks incessantly" and would one day turn into a "prodigious bore." According to Isherwood, his voice (that is, the voice of Stephen Savage) "would carry to the farthest corners of the largest restaurant the most intimate details of his private life." In Oxford, it was we who burbled on. Was he hanging on our words or was he miles away? We couldn't tell.

Over coffee, though, things changed. We'd had our say; now it was his turn. What was he doing these days? Did he care about reviews? With each question, Spender winced, as if he had been prodded with a fork. But his eyes seemed to have brightened, and, for the first time that evening, his total attention was engaged. He was earning his keep, he said, lecturing at American universities—usually on Auden and the thirties. Also, in connection with *Encounter*, he attended a lot of congresses in Europe. And, yes, he did care about reviews—so much so that he had stopped publishing his poems in book form. Young people didn't know how wounding reviews could be. "They think we don't mind it, but we do." He sounded close to tears, but when we looked he wasn't. He was staring straight at us, and again there was that glint of mischief. We fell silent and took to studying our cups. No further questions. We had been comprehensively disarmed.

Later on, after Spender had left and we had recovered our accustomed cool, we tried to sort out our impressions. Our critical weaponry had been routed—of that there was no doubt. For the first time, we had met a name poet we felt sorry for, a poet who had chosen us as his confessors. And yet we also felt pretty sure that Spender had manipulated the entire event. He had somehow made us warm to him; he'd made us drop our guard. After all, what had we learned? Not very much. And the same could be said about the talk he gave that night: none of us could quite recall its substance, but the presentation had been winning—shy, apologetic, I-could-well-be-wrong. The audience—an unusually large one, as it happened—seemed mightily impressed. One woman, on the way out, was heard to remark upon his "aura."

Spender's departure was courtly but abrupt, as if, having delivered, he were suddenly anxious to return to base. We watched him take off along the High Street. Even from the back, he looked hesitant, but he seemed to know where he was going. Was he bound for some vexing encounter with the Muse, or for late brandies at All Souls? It could have been either; it could even have been both. Or was it just that he had had enough of us? If so, we couldn't blame him. Whatever it was, we were left feeling both humbled and perplexed.

I HAVE since learned that ours was a fairly typical response to Spender's charm. Throughout his career, he has given rise to several varieties of puzzlement. A saint or a schemer? A victim of fashion or a skillful self-advancer? A talent neglected or a small gift made too much of? These are the familiar questions about Stephen Spender. Everyone asks them, but no one seems to know

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WANTED POSTER

From off a closed, block-long post office
I heard him whisper
Out of his flyspecked mouth
As I hurried by on the street.

Hunted beast, he said, with eyes
Dark and mean under the rusty thumbtacks,
Who furloughed you today
To go around grinning at every woman you meet?

—CHARLES SIMIC

quite where they came from. The answer is: they came from him. In his numerous volumes of poetry, fiction, autobiography, diaries, and letters, Spender has had one predominating subject: Who am I? To which, in each book, there has usually been one reply: I wish I knew. If Spender has become an enigma, it is not because he has shown us too little of himself. On the contrary, he has given us more than we can easily digest—a surfeit of self-exploration.

To judge from his writings, the Spender self can be explored by way of three paramount, lifelong preoccupations: fame, sex, and politics. In each of these areas, irresolution struck early and struck deep, so that studying his life story is rather like studying a map on which all roads lead you back to where you started. The signposts are timidity, guilt, vanity, remorse. The cartographer is Stephen Spender.

Another signpost—some would say the one that really matters—is personal publicity. In his 1951 autobiography, "World Within World," he recalls a formative childhood embarrassment. His father, Harold Spender, a well-known Liberal journalist, decided in 1923 that he would stand for Parliament in the General Election. He became the Liberal candidate for Bath, and he recruited the fourteen-year-old Stephen and his younger brother to serve as his campaign aides. The two children were trundled through the streets of Bath in a donkey cart. Around the donkey's neck was hung a placard: "Vote for Daddy." Harold, on the hustings, introduced them by exclaiming to the audience, "I have brought up my reserves!" He lost the election.

This incident, among others, had two effects on Spender: it made him ask questions about Daddy, whom he was accustomed to revere, and it instilled in him a sharp appetite for popular attention. In "World Within World" he tells us, "Even today it often disgusts me to read a newspaper in which there is no mention of my name." And in his published journals he reveals that a word such as "spring," seen on the page, will always cause his heart to "stop a beat." A nicely poetic impulse, you might think, but no: the heart stop is what happens when he sees "the printed word 'Spender' or even—now I am getting a bit astigmatic—any conformation of letters like it. ('Spring,' for example.)"

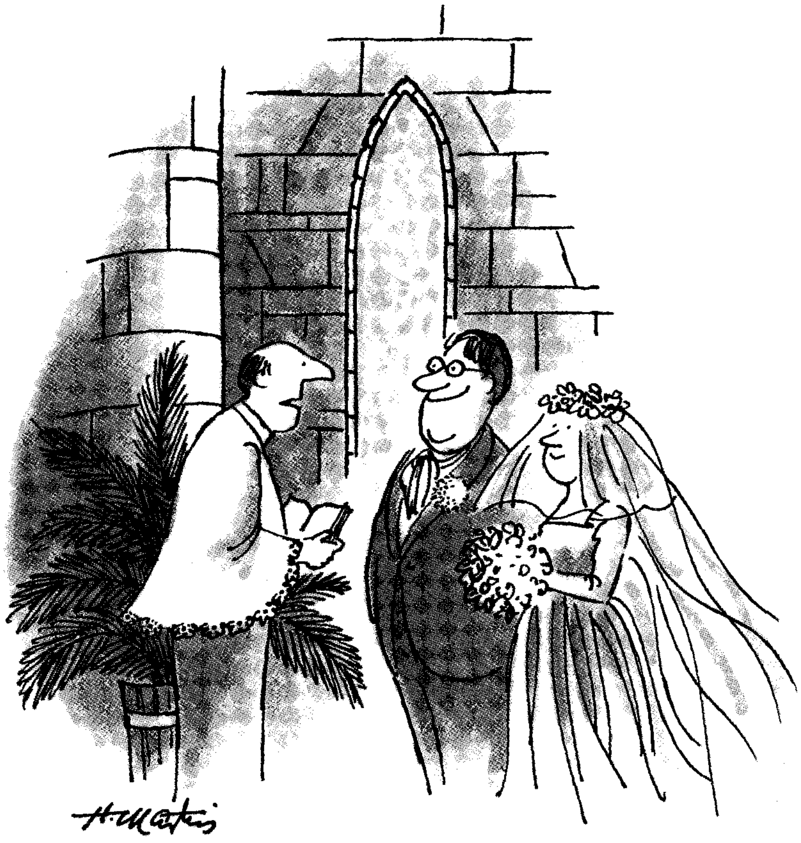
Spender himself claims to regard this trait as "repellent and odious." He says, "I obviously have a secret craving for very vulgar publicity. At the same time I despise this." This is very Spenderesque—to name the flaw before we do, and then speak of it more harshly than we would. Still, it was there, and it probably had much to do with his choice of vocation. As an earnest adolescent, he wanted to channel his odious self-love into realms higher and nobler than the ones his father moved in.

Even at fourteen, Stephen knew himself to be more sensitive than Harold. Certainly he was more easily embarrassed. Perhaps this sensitivity came from his mother, Violet, who died when he was twelve. A semi-invalid, she had kept her family on tiptoe. She painted, wrote verse, and was given to hysterical frenzies and protracted sulks. Violet's chaise-longue dramatics counterbalanced Harold's man-of-the-world shallowness, and later on Spender seemed to wish that he could remember her more fondly. The truth was, she got on his nerves: "If I felt the death of my mother at all, it was as the lightening of a burden and as a stimulating excitement."

But she did write verse. And an uncle, J. A. Spender, was the editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, a friend of Henry James and Oscar Wilde, and a heeded voice in Victorian intellectual circles. A grandmother, Lily Spender (née Headland), had been a noted novelist; her "Parted Lives" was once bracketed with "Middlemarch." Compared with these, Harold was a Grub Street hustler. By the time Stephen went up to Oxford, in 1928, he had declared that his own fame would not be cheaply won. He would pursue it as a Poet.

No doubt, Harold would have been appalled by his son's declaration: his attitude to modern verse was rudely philistine. But Harold died in 1926, and Stephen, with the small private income left to him by his maternal grandfather, was suddenly free to be a rebel, to reject his father's Victorian work ethic. An orphan, he could remake himself without fear of reprisals. The prospect seemed thrilling, but facing it close at hand put Spender into a deep panic. Fame was the spur and poetry the vocation. But how on earth did one begin?

When, in years to come, Spender told T. S. Eliot that he wanted to "be a poet," Eliot responded, "I can understand your wanting to write poems, but



"Do you, people-person Harvey, take you, cat-person Jessica . . ."

I don't quite know what you mean by 'being a poet.' " Nor, at twenty, did Spender. The affectation was what mattered, and, for this, Oxford in the nineteen-twenties was the place to be. The so-called Brideshead Generation had moved on by the time Spender enrolled at University College, but much of its legacy remained. People still painted their rooms pink, wore monogrammed silk shirts, and threw outrageous parties: lobster Newburg served in dustbins, blood-colored soup, and so on.

Although neither rich nor posh enough to set up as a thoroughgoing dandy and poseur, Spender was swift to present his credentials as a budding aesthete. In those days, there were aesthetes and hearties, and you had to be one or the other. Hearties drank beer, chased girls, played sports, despised the arts. "Affectation is an aping of hidden outrageous qualities which are our real potentialities," Spender wrote in his autobiography. "I aped my own exhibitionism, effeminacy, rootlessness and lack of discipline." He announced himself to be "a pacifist and a Socialist, a genius." He wore a red tie, hung reproductions of paintings by Gauguin, van Gogh, and Paul Klee on his walls, and "on fine days, I used to take a cushion into the quadrangle, and sitting down on it read poetry."

This was enough, it seems, to bring him to the attention of W. H. Auden, who had already achieved legendary status in the university by promoting an alternative to the old Brideshead styles of affectation. Where the standard Oxford aesthete of the twenties had been showily dissipated, full of wild talk about decadence and beauty, Auden was preaching a new gospel of icy austerity and self-control. A poet, he would say, is like a chemist, a clinician. His own work was full of obscure words drawn from psychology and science, and it eschewed all traces of emotional excess. He also insisted on the need for expertise in traditional metres and verse forms. He wore a monocle and always kept his curtains drawn. If you wanted to see him, you needed an appointment.

Spender, who had been shaping up as an apprentice Blake or Shelley, was entranced. It was not that he wanted to write poetry like Auden's—he already suspected that he couldn't—but he did want to be allowed to join his gang. Auden, it turned out, had already decided on the shape of things to come. Over the next decade, he would be the Top Poet, and Christopher Isherwood would be Top Novelist. He spoke of these matters as if they were already settled. Spender instantly offered himself as a candidate for one of the vacant lower ranks: Poet No. 2, perhaps, or No. 3 or 4? When Auden eventually gave him a qualified thumbs-up, he was elated:

> Once I told him I wondered whether I ought to write prose, and he answered: "You must write nothing but poetry, we do not want to lose you for poetry." This remark produced in me a choking moment of hope mingled with despair, in which I cried: "But do you *really* think I am *any* good?" "Of course," he replied frigidly. "But why?" "Because you are so infinitely capable of being humiliated. Art is born of humiliation," he added in his icy voice—and left me wondering when *he* could feel humiliated.

In "World Within World" Spender presents this as a purely literary transaction, but membership in Auden's gang had other implications. Both Auden and Isherwood were committed homosexuals, and Spender, typically, was not sure what he was. He had had sentimental attachments to both boys and girls, but neither had been strikingly successful. When he met Auden, he was hopelessly in love with one of his fellow-students—a hearty he calls Marston, who met his "fussy and old-womanish" advances with not always tolerant disdain. Spender was "repelled" at times by his own conduct in this matter but could not break free of "that sore and flaming wheel I must live by."

Auden and Isherwood were in no doubt that Spender was *comme ça*, or T.B.H.—two code names of the day. (T.B.H. meant "to be had.") For them, there was no other way to be. Once, when Spender had a falling-out with Isherwood and then suggested, "If we're going to part, at least let's part like men," Isherwood replied, "But, Stephen, we *aren't* men." For Spender, part of the attraction of the Auden gang was that, unlike him, they were sexually decisive. They liked being naughty boys. They even made jokes about it. Now and again, Spender was the subject of those jokes.

In nineteen-twenties Oxford, it was "chic to be queer," according to Isaiah Berlin, and "many students who weren't had to pretend to be, if they wanted to be socially successful." Spender longed to be chic, but could detect no affectation in his love for Marston. In the so-called Marston poems, he comes across as howlingly fixated. As Auden recognized, these are guilt poems rather than love poems. They want to sound exalted, but they're too sickly with self-hatred. In his autobiography Spender speaks of his "search for the identification of my own aims with those of another man," and there is a near-comic pomposity in his analysis of sexual definitions:

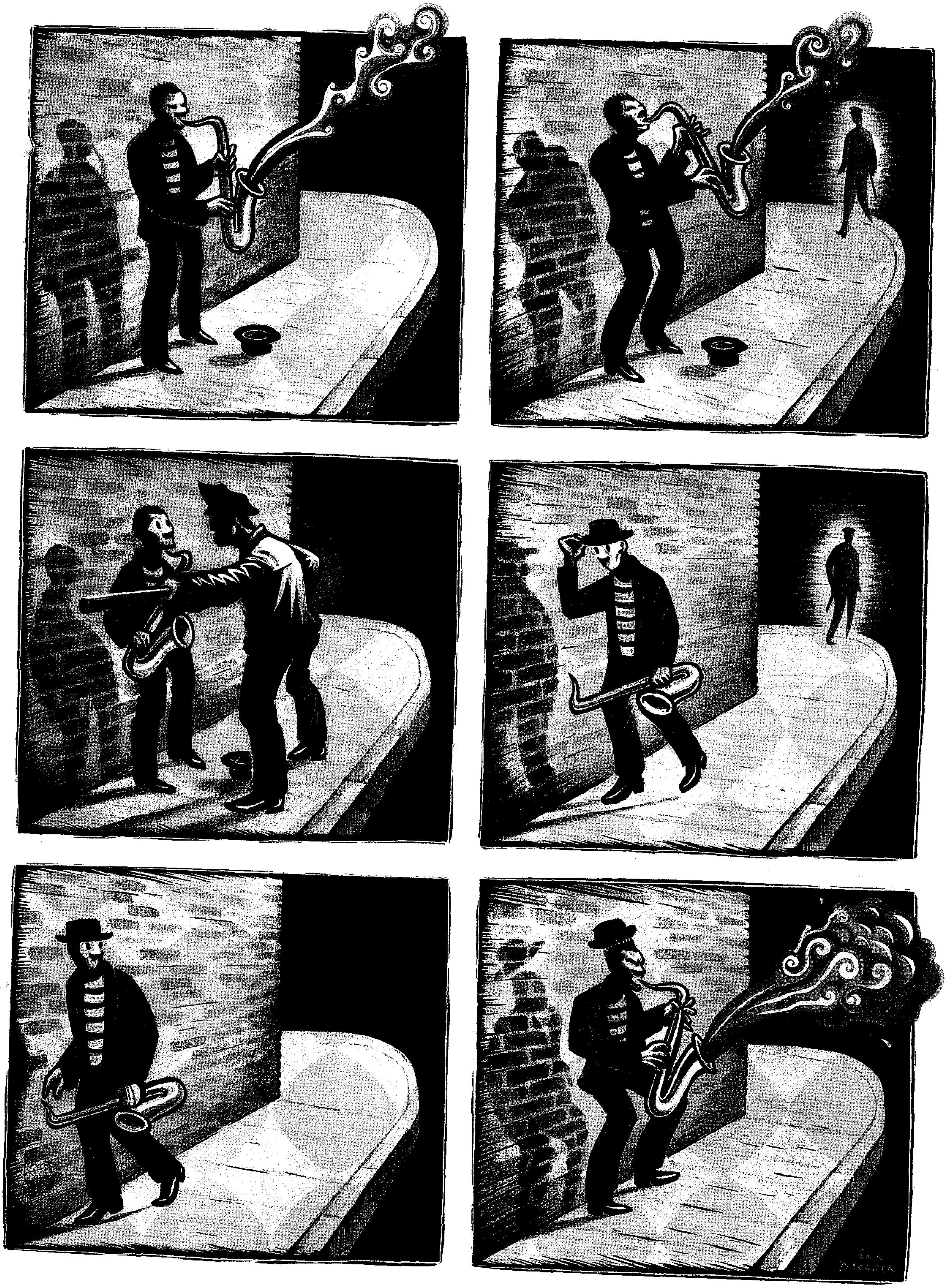
> I suspect that many people feel today that a conception of friendship which can be labeled homosexual, on account of certain of its aspects, excludes normal sexual relationships: and conversely that the heterosexual relationship should preclude those which might be interpreted as homosexual. As a result of this tendency to give themselves labels, people feel forced to make a choice which, in past times, was not made. It also follows that since a relationship of the highest understanding can be between two people of the same sex, some who have experienced this relationship renounce a normal way of life.

Spender did not altogether want to "renounce a normal way of life," but neither did he want to abandon his search for male relationships "of the highest understanding." Post-Oxford (he left in 1931, without taking a degree), he seemed to most observers to have made a decision—at least, for the time being. Isherwood was by then living in Berlin and was mailing back accounts of the rich pickings, or pickups, to be had there. The German Boy, he reported, was not like the English Boy. On summer vacation in Hamburg before his last year at Oxford, Spender had liked what he saw. Young Germans were guilt-free, adventurous, and proudly physical. They sunbathed in the nude. He wrote in his journal, "Now I shall begin to live."

And live he did, although not in the louche way of an Isherwood. His Ernsts and Helmuts were not to be located in boy bars. In Spender's novel "The Temple," which he began writing at this time but didn't finish, the drippy, repressed English hero discovers in Germany "a new attitude toward the body": once "sinful," it has now become "a source of joy." Not that "The Temple" is a joyful book; far from it. Whereas Isherwood's accounts of Germany between the wars are full of a sly, sexy relish, Spender's are always dolefully high-toned. German

SKETCHBOOK • BY ERIC DROOKER

THE SOUND



bodies are lovingly gaped at, but, as soon as they begin to move, our hero breaks out into an English sweat.

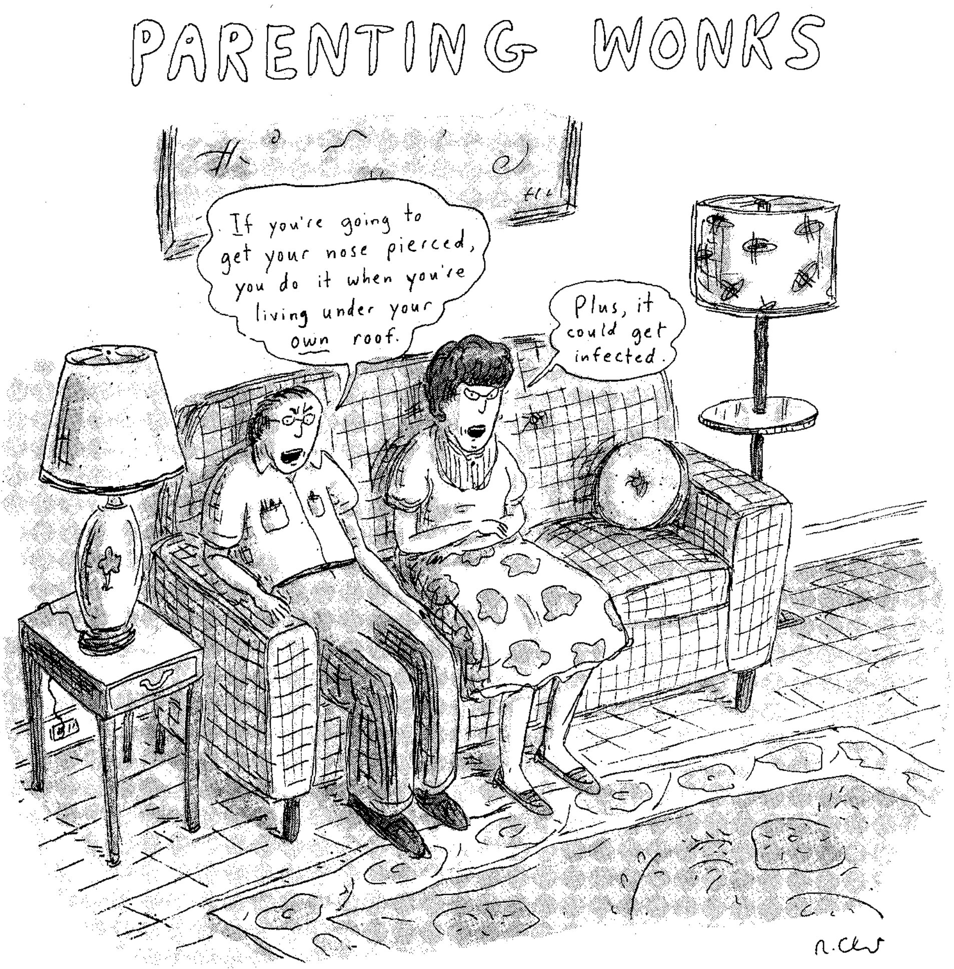
As with sex, so with politics. Where Isherwood, in his Berlin stories, gets a perverse thrill out of the encroaching atmosphere of social menace—the decadence before the storm—Spender's first instinct is to plunge into lengthy ruminations about his own role in the coming conflict. Was he a poet or a political activist? Could the quest for personal fulfillment be reconciled with a commitment to the public good? Was it possible for politics to be personal, intense, good for the soul?

This self-questioning carried on throughout the thirties. From 1930 to 1933, Spender divided his time between Germany and England, and during that period he acquired a reputation as one of the new poets. There was much praise for his attempt to inject political concerns into his essentially self-centered lyrics. There was praise, too, for his "sense of pity." Auden, whose first book had appeared in 1930, was hailed as his generation's satirist and prophet. Spender's role was to provide soulfulness and passion. Critics were ready to overlook the details: the archaic diction, the confused syntax, the wild apostrophes to Time, History, and Freedom. Apart from the odd pylon or express train, Spender's thirties poems were thoroughly old-fashioned, but there was perhaps a timeliness in this. Auden, after all, was often forbiddingly cryptic and oblique.

Spender was not, of course, a poet of the people, although he sometimes wrote as if he were. His books of verse sold about a thousand copies each. His compassion for the victims of history was savored mostly in literary circles. And in these circles fame was to be measured in terms of reviews in highbrow quarterlies and invitations to dinner at the Woolfs', or to Ottoline Morrell's salons, or to T. S. Eliot's club. Spender was gleeful when such invitations started to pour in. He seemed to find it easy to keep his politics separate from his social life. And he was well liked by the pacifists, monarchists, and aesthetes who controlled the London literary scene. They found him engagingly impulsive and confused. In his autobiography, there is more reverence for the great hostesses of the day than there is for any of his left-wing political associates:

> Living in their small country houses, their London flats, full of taste, meeting at week-ends and at small parties, discussing history, painting, literature, gossiping greatly, and producing a few very good stories, they resembled those friends who at the time of the Plague in Florence withdrew into the countryside and told the stories of Boccaccio.

Spender's opponents would say that his struggle against Fascism was in reality a struggle to safeguard these small parties and weekends.


PARENTING WONKS
If you're going to get your nose pierced, you do it when you're living under your own roof.
Plus, it could get infected.

On weekdays, though, he was busily living up to his new reputation as a fervent Socialist. He set up house with a proletarian ex-soldier, Tony Hyndman. He wrote articles and pamphlets, addressed meetings, signed petitions. He wrote anguished poems about poverty and unemployment, slums and factories. He even wrote a prose book, called "Forward from Liberalism," in which he argued that old-style Liberals, of the sort he had grown up with, "must accept the methods which it might be necessary to use in order to defeat Fascism"—in other words, the methods of Communism.

This was Spender's bid for status as a hard-nosed political thinker. The Communists took his unfeeling treatise at face value and offered him a Party card. Out of politeness, almost, Spender accepted. His membership, he said later, lasted for a month. The Party wanted him to go to Spain. "Go and get killed, Comrade," the C.P. leader is said to have told him. "We need a Byron in the movement." They wanted him to write propaganda, to toe the Party line on Moscow. He was fiercely upbraided for having expressed doubts about the treason trials.

This contact with real politics was enough to send Spender scurrying back to his home ground. He had come to recognize, he said, that he could support no political "method" that prohibited personal dissent—or, in his case, personal confusion. And a couple of comic and disastrous trips to Spain confirmed him in this view. His real subject, he now saw, was what it had always been: the private self. And in 1936 that self was urgently in need of some repairs. His relationship with Hyndman was foundering. Like real politics, real proletarians could become boringly restrictive. "I stifle in a bugger's world," he wrote. It was time for him to come up with a new analysis of his sexual "ambivalence":

> I could not develop beyond a certain point unless I were able to enter a stream of nature through human contacts, that is to say, through experience of women. Yet I never lost the need for camaraderie also, my desire to share my creative and intellectual adventures with a man, whose search was the same as mine.
>
> The two needs, while existing side by side, seemed to some extent to be mutually exclusive.

Spender's immediate solution to this impasse was a hasty marriage to one Inez Pearn, a student of Spanish poetry, whom he had met a few weeks earlier. "If I did not act on impulse I decided nothing" was his plea. This betrayal was greeted with astonishment all around, and not least by Tony Hyndman, who at once volunteered for action in the Spanish Civil War. After a brief taste of front-line duty, Tony declared himself a pacifist, and a remorseful Spender, already in Spain, rushed to his aid. Not surprisingly, the marriage to Inez soon collapsed, and Spender was back, more or less, where he began.

By 1939, with the outbreak of war, many of the delusions of the nineteen-thirties lay in ruins. When Auden and Isherwood fled to the United States, Spender stayed put in London—adrift, as he saw it, in the wreckage of his thirties enterprise. He was now wifeless and companionless and, in the eyes of many, a symbol of the decade's follies. He had become a well-known ex-poet of the thirties. On the day war broke out, he wrote, "I feel as if I could not write again. Words seem to break in my mind like sticks when I put them down on paper. I cannot see how to spell some of them. Sentences are covered with leaves, and I really cannot see the line of the branch that carries the green meaning."

NOW eighty-five, Stephen Spender is still answering questions about the thirties. He has been doing so for fifty years and more. His career since 1939 has brought him numerous honors and awards. There have been lectureships and professorships and, in 1983, a knighthood for his "services to literature." But the thirties tag persists, and he has not done much to remove it. Many of his books have been thirties-linked: "World Within World," "Letters to Christopher," "The Thirties and After." He has tinkered endlessly with his poems of the period, toning them down, wising them up. In 1988, he finally brought out "The Temple." He has given countless interviews and broadcasts on the thirties, and in recent years, with the deaths of Auden, Connolly, Isherwood, and others, he has been in demand for TV obituaries and tributes. Not long ago, he was on the cover of a Sunday-paper supplement, cozying up to a young actress. This was to mark a new London production of "Cabaret," the show based on Isherwood's stories of Berlin. Although some might see the thirties as a cross that he has had to bear, others would say that he has milked that "low dishonest decade" for rather more than it is worth.

In the early forties, Spender joined the London Fire Brigade—he served with it throughout much of the war—and helped Cyril Connolly start up the magazine *Horizon*. (*Horizon's* first editorial proclaimed, "Our standards are aesthetic, and our politics are in abeyance.") In 1941, he married again; his second wife was the pianist Natasha Litvin. The daughter of the musicologist Edwin Evans and the actress Ray Litvin, Natasha was brought up on the fringes of the nineteen-thirties left-wing intellectual scene and was introduced to Spender at a *Horizon* lunch, in September, 1940. "I thought Horizon was a pub," she told me, which suggests that she knew little of her husband-to-be's literary status, and she added in a letter:

> Thereafter we were courting through the Blitz—coming out of restaurants to see A.R.P. workers shovelling up broken glass and other bomb debris—we were oddly unconcerned for safety—foolhardy. (I must write it up some time—Erika Mann and Brian Howard sheltering exuberantly under the piano I was playing at [a] party during an air raid—very curious times they were.) Stephen and I married in April, 1941—lived for some weeks chez the A. J. P. Taylors in Oxford. . . . We then lived in London in the top flat of the Ernst Freuds' house in Maresfield Gardens—Lucian had a studio full of dead birds in our flat—and I played concerts and when pregnant learned "babycraft" at the Anna Freud wartime nursery for which we campaigned to raise money. . . . The Stephen I met in 1940 . . . had the qualities he's never lost in fifty-three years. Apart from being the most generous and forgiving person I had ever met, . . . he was—and is—the most truthful.

In this marriage, each of them promised, there would be "no question of blame." They are still together, and have two children: Matthew, a painter, sculptor, and writer, and Lizzie, an actress and writer, who, to Spender's great delight, is married to the female impersonator Barry Humphries, better known as Dame Edna Everage. Nowadays, at parties, the Spenders rarely fail to catch the eye—and not just because they are both fairly tall. Handsome, young-looking for their years, they must have been—well, knockouts in the nineteen-forties. No wonder Edith Sitwell wrote to them, in the forties, "You and Natasha with whom all parties of mine begin. I mean you are the centre and then I spread outwards."

After the war, Spender joined UNESCO as Counsellor to the Section of Letters, and this marked a new phase of his celebrity: a twenty-year-long stint as a kind of globe-trotting cultural emissary. The postwar years were good years in which to be an intellectual. The civilized world had to be rebuilt, but thoughtfully: this time, we had to get it right. Huge congresses were organized at which famous thinkers debated the big questions: "Freedom and the Artist," "The Role of the Artist," "Art and the Totalitarian Threat." Spender was in regular attendance at such gatherings in Europe, and was soon in demand for trips to India, Japan, even Australia. These "junketings," as he described them, were usually paid for by the Congress for Cultural Freedom, based in Washington, as part of America's hearts-and-minds offensive against Communism. In 1953, he was approached by the congress to edit the literary side of a new monthly, *Encounter*, which would be "anti-Communist in policy but not McCarthyite." (He was told that the money for it came from the Farfield Foundation, a supposedly independent body.) Spender, it had been noted, contributed to the much discussed 1949 anthology "The God That Failed," a collection of contrite essays by six of Europe's most prominent ex-Communists. His 1936 flirtation with the Party was no longer to be laughed at: he had experienced that of which he spake, and could thus be seen as a Cold Warrior of high potential.

As Spender saw it, there was nothing at all warlike in the politics he'd settled for—a politics that transcended immediate East-West disputes, that dealt not in power plays but in moral absolutes. "I am for neither West nor

East," he wrote in 1951, "but for myself considered as a self—one of the millions who inhabit the earth." Freedom of speech, the preëminence of the individual conscience—in short, the mainstream liberal verities—would from now on be the components of his faith.

He had by this time become the Spender who disconcerted us in Oxford. No longer the holy fool of thirties legend, he was transmuting into an itinerant representative of liberal unease. During the late fifties and throughout the sixties, Spender was perpetually on the move, sometimes as troubled ambassador for Western values, for the congress, for International PEN, or for the British Council, an agency for promoting British culture abroad, and sometimes as hard-up literary journeyman, lecturing on modern poetry at Berkeley or Wesleyan or the University of Florida—wherever the fees were sufficiently enticing—or dreaming up viable book projects, such as "Love-Hate Relations," a study of Anglo-American literary relationships, and "The Year of the Young Rebels," an account of the 1968 upheavals in Paris, Prague, New York, and West Berlin.

In 1970, Spender's English friends tried to get him to slow down, to settle. At the age of sixty-one, he was appointed professor at University College, London—not bad going for an "ineducable" (his word) Oxford dropout, but, as it turned out, a big mistake. Frank Kermode, who fixed the job for him, is full of fond stories about Spender's bumbling ways, and says, "He is cut out to be the sort of visiting poetic professor rather than a run-of-the-mill teacher." In 1975, Spender retired and was at once back on the United States circuit—Florida, then Cornell, then Vanderbilt. In between, he was to be found once more in Seoul, Tokyo, Teheran—back in the old PEN routine.

During these years, Spender produced little poetry. "The Generous Days" appeared in 1971, and was his first new volume of poetry since 1949. It was reviewed with kindliness by some, dismissively by others. ("A Generous Daze" was the title of one harsh review. Hardly anyone treated the publication as a significant event.) Meanwhile, the Poetry of the Thirties had become a hot subject in the universities: books and articles were beginning to pour out in which Spender—the young Spender—was treated as a centrally important figure. It was as if he were savoring his own posterity. Sometimes the taste was bitter: "I imagine the young reading nothing of me but the bad notices other young critics write," he wrote. "Poets today are simply critics' guinea-pigs—at any rate their poems are. The so-called 'science' of modern criticism has been invented specifically for performing vivisection on poets."

THESE remarks, and others of similar import, are recorded in Spender's "Journals 1939-83," which was published in 1985 and welcomed by reviewers with a warmth that no other recent book of his had enjoyed. Here was a man who had been everywhere, known everyone. The critics quoted with appreciation his tales of Eliot, Auden, Forster, Sartre, Aragon: there were few twentieth-century literary celebrities whom he had not at least had lunch with, or sat next to on a panel, or shaken hands with at a cultural reception. According to Spender's friend David Plante, famous people have more "credibility" for Stephen than those who are unknown. And musicians and painters and sculptors figured in the "Journals," too. Bacon, Hockney, Henry Moore were all close friends—closer, in fact, than most of the literary big names. These friendships were remarked on with near-abject reverence by one or two reviewers, as if they were appraising not a book but an address book. But there was admiration also for Spender's numerous good deeds over the years, and for his commitment to the journal *Index on Censorship*, his eagerness to speak out, in letters and petitions, whenever free speech seemed to be imperilled, his modesty, his candor, his paternal conscientiousness, and so on.

Some commentators marvelled that Spender had ever managed to find time for writing. He had always seemed to be out and about. In addition to his working of the cultural networks, there was the matter of his friendships with the Astors, the de Rothschilds, the Glenconners. Big-money names like these pepper the pages of his diaries. When he is not lodging at Michael Astor's Oxfordshire estate, he is cruising the Mediterranean on Hansi Lambert's yacht. In America, he hobnobs with Anne Cox Chambers and Drue Heinz. On his seventieth birthday, the claret is laid on by Philippe de Rothschild. "Stephen has always been interested in knowing grand people," Kermode says. "But not in any odious way." And, clearly enough, grand people have a weakness for Stephen. "He is so amusing and has such wonderful stories about such interesting people," David Plante attests. "After all, he has been a witness to so many great events. He is very charming, and also these people are flattered to have a famous poet as their friend."

According to Plante, Spender does not go looking for these glittering contacts—they simply happen, or one leads to another. And Spender, Plante says, has no time for an unamusing toff. He requires his millionaires and aristos to have style—to be smart enough to be amused by him. In the dourer zones of literary London, Spender's socializing is frequently jeered at: here he is, the ex-Communist, this voice of the downtrodden, spending all his holidays and weekends as a kind of court jester, or court conscience, to the rich. Such killjoys also speak mockingly of his "great house in Provence." This French residence, I am assured by those who have visited, is no château. On the contrary, it cost the Spenders five hundred pounds when they purchased it, in 1960, and was then a ruin. Many comic tales are told of Spender's refurbishing exploits, his tree planting and weed plucking. All in all, the whole thing sounds more like Peter Mayle than like Philippe de Rothschild, although when Spender needed electricity in 1960 he *was* able to get André Malraux to phone the local prefect on his behalf.

Among his friends, Spender has a reputation as a wit, and he himself has well described his circle at the dinner table: "frivolous descendants of Bloomsbury who make a game of passing the ball of conversation from one to the other, feeling the cuff of rebuke if anyone tries to introduce a note of world-suffering into the conversation." "Passing the ball of conversation" usually means gossip about absent or dead friends, and in this genre Spender is reputed to excel. His style can be "malicious even but not malignant," Berlin says. "Mischievous but not *méchant*," David Plante says. He possesses a rich stock of slightly sneaky anecdotes—about Auden, Evelyn Waugh, John Lehmann—and will repeat them word for word, seeming to have plucked them from the air. And then there is the giggle. After delivering one of his feline thrusts, Spender is likely to splutter in helpless merriment, or in delight at his own naughtiness. "He thinks of himself as a great comic turn," one friend says. "He almost knows he is a fraud. Well, not a fraud exactly—a performer. And the giggle is part of his great charm—it is his way of signalling that he, too, finds Stephen Spender a bit silly."

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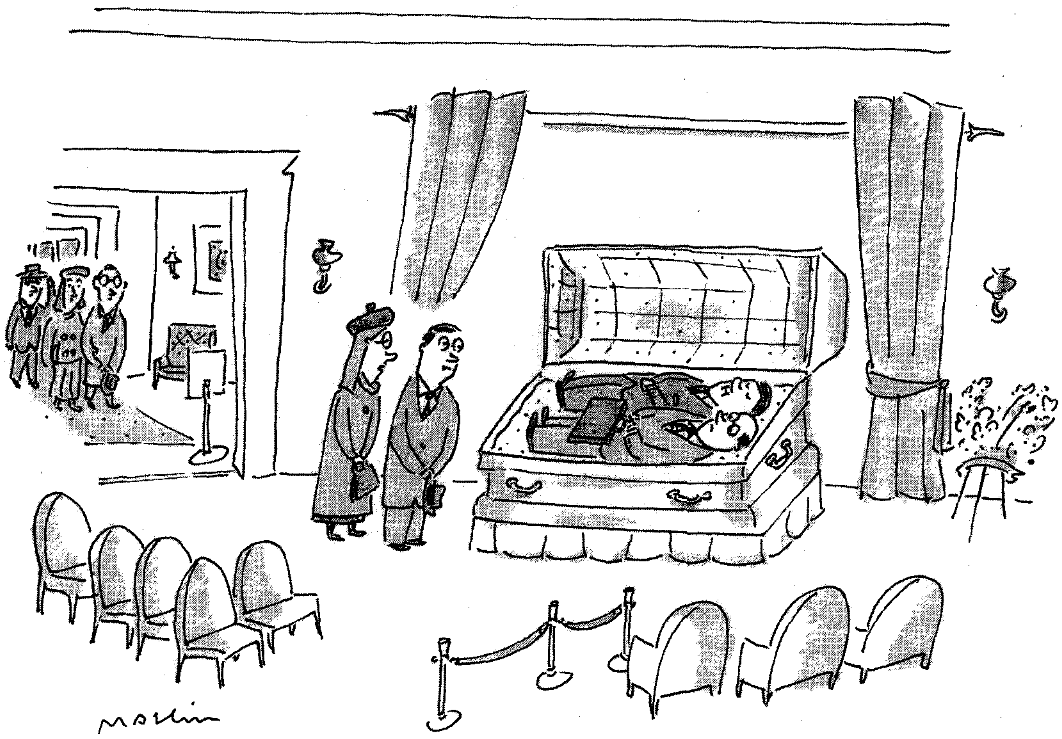
In the "Journals," there is not much wit, but there is plenty of self-deprecation. And there is also a deep-running vein of disappointment—a recognition that for all his fame, for all his hard-won virtue, he has fallen short, sold out, preferred the warmth of social bustle and quick plaudits to the cold solitude of the genuine creator. Whose fault is that? His, or the hurtful critics'? One day, Spender will castigate himself for feebleness: "I wonder whether I am so mild through weakness, timidity, conviction, perversity or what. I think it is a mixture of these things," and "I'm struggling at the end to get out of the valley of hectoring youth, journalistic middle age, imposture, money making, public relations, bad writing, mental confusion." On other days, he will whimper about getting a raw deal. On some days, he'll do both: the two are absurdly interlocked. Reading the book through in 1985, I could have been back at that Oxford dinner table: half liking him, half wondering what he was trying to pull.

BUT has Spender been given a raw deal? On the face of it, the proposition seems ludicrous. He is now ranked as one of Britain's most venerable poets, yet hardly anyone can remember more than a line or two from his entire œuvre, and the lines they can recall are always taken from his thirties



"His only request was that he be buried with his accountant."

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work. Even people who profess to like his poems can never quite bring to mind *which ones* they like. They mumble about his "sincerity," or they "vividly recall" reading "The Pylons" or "The Landscape Near an Aerodrome" at school. And it is this discrepancy, this gulf between repute and demonstrable achievement, that has led critics to go at him with vehemence.

One can see their point, but this doesn't mean that there hasn't been an injustice. In my view, Spender is not really a poet of the thirties. Temperamentally, he belongs in the following decade, in the company of neo-Romantics like Dylan Thomas and George Barker. He may have been impressed by Auden's doctrines of impersonality, but he never actually knew what to do with them. In the forties, the fashion was for the irrational, the dark unconscious, the deep vat of the self. With Auden gone, Spender was able to relax into his true element. And yet he did so with Auden still lurking at his elbow—an influence that, on the whole, kept him at one remove from the willed incoherence that became the forties norm. Spender's war poems are pretty dreadful—"scalding lead anxiety," "wild seas / Of chafing despairs." Even so, one feels that, but for Auden, they would have been much worse. After the war, the work that matters is all personal. The faults persist: the bardic posturing, the dead adjectives, the weedy self-absorption, the vein-popping effort for magniloquence—"I, who stand beneath a bitter / Blasted tree, with the green life / Of summer joy cut from my side." Now and again, though, as in sections of Spender's elegy for his sister-in-law, an attempt is made to prune away the affectations, and when this happens an authentic lyric tenderness does struggle through:

"How far we travelled, sweetheart,
Since that day when first we chose
Each other as each other's rose
And put all other worlds apart."

Since the nineteen-forties, Spender's strongest work has been "occasional": "Remembering Cincinnati, 1953," "Auden's Funeral," "Late Stravinsky Listening to Late Beethoven," "Louis MacNeice." By setting his sights lower, he has achieved a decent competence. The language, pared down, purged of the old luridness, still fails to sparkle, and the rhythms are too often inert, but at least he seems now to have a sensible measure of his gifts. This explorer of the self turns out to be at his most effective when exploring his memories of other people; the prophet's best insights come, in the end, from looking back.

When I visited Spender last December at his home in North London, I was determined to make at least some of my questions present tense. He was about to publish a new book of poems, his first since 1985, and two or three of them, it seems to me, are as good as anything he's done. These, too, are elegies, in memory of a young American, Brian Obst, who died three years ago, from AIDS: "Letter from an Ornithologist in Antarctica," "Farewell to My Student," and "Laughter." I would ask him about these.

And so I did (Obst was "one of the best people I have ever met," Spender said, and he went on to talk of him at length, with evident affection), but there was no avoiding the old topic: Spender in the thirties. This time, it was he who brought it up. During the week before I called, he had been in the throes of legal action against the novelist David Leavitt and his publisher to halt the British publication of Leavitt's "While England Sleeps." The charge was that Leavitt had made fiction out of Spender's life as Spender himself recounted it in "World Within World." The central relationship in Leavitt's novel is clearly based on the Spender-Hyndman liaison of the thirties, and the main action has to do with the Spender figure, Brian Botsford, chasing off to Spain to rescue his lost lover, Edward Phelan. In Leavitt, the hero is a novelist, not a poet, and went to Cambridge, not Oxford, and Phelan is a ticket-collector on the London Underground, but the resemblances are unmistakable. For long stretches, Leavitt's book reads like a dutiful response to some college writing assignment: fictionalize your favorite nonfiction; liberate into explicitness a coy text from the past. There is an earnest, mugged-up quality to the whole enterprise, although the intention, one suspects, was to register admiration, by empathy, for Spender's nineteen-thirties love quest.

"World Within World" is achingly discreet on sexual matters. It had to be:

in 1951, the homosexual act was still a crime in England. Leavitt, though, lets rip; he has page after page of lingering physical description, and it was these pages that I expected Spender to object to. Botsford, although he has moments of Spenderish "ambivalence," is a hundred per cent gay. He thinks about marrying a girl, to please an aunt whose money he depends on, but in the end he doesn't. His real treachery is social: he keeps Phelan away from his smart friends.

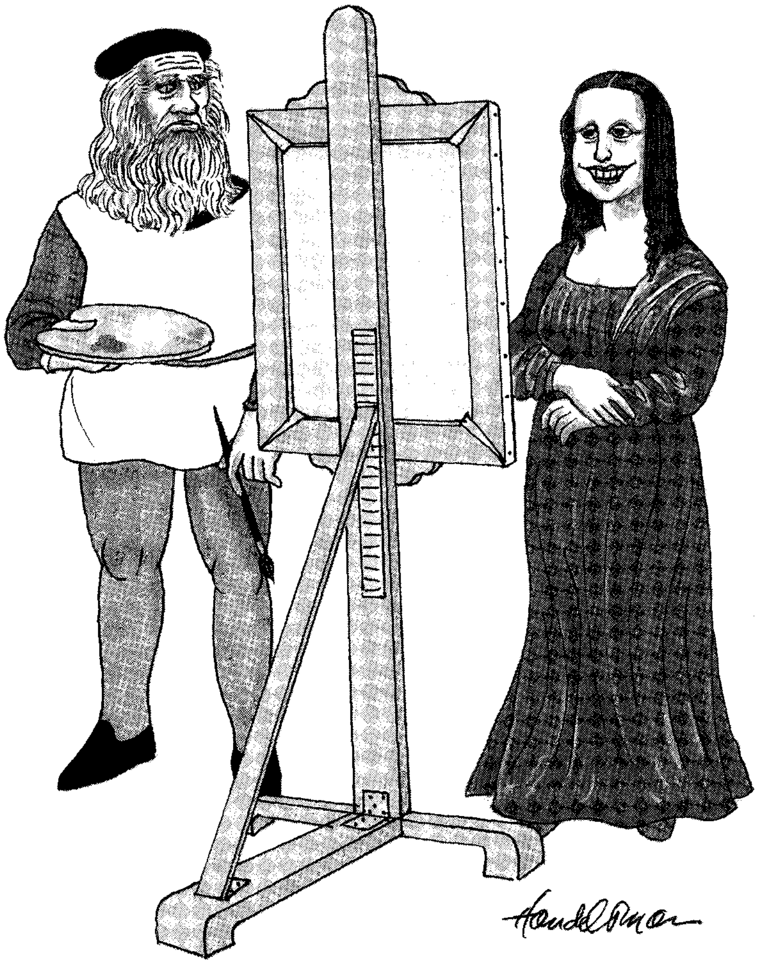
I put it to Spender that the reams of gay sex in Leavitt's book must have been—well, peculiar to read. Spender agreed that the book is "pornographic," but he said, "What I really object to is that Leavitt has no sense of history. The Barcelona he describes is based on his experiences of the city in the eighties. In 1936, Barcelona was not at all as he describes it. I blame the publishers. Publishers get their young writers into a great deal of trouble."

Later, I asked friends of Spender's why he was making such a fuss about the Leavitt book, and why, a year and a half earlier, he had gone to great lengths to stop the publication of Hugh David's 1992 biography "Stephen Spender: A Portrait with Background." In his campaign against David, he sent letters to the directors of Heinemann, the book's publisher, wrote articles, gave interviews, drew up detailed lists of the book's factual errors. The friends' verdict was that neither of these well-publicized dramas had been of Spender's making. "He has been steamed up by Natasha," Isaiah Berlin told me. And Frank Kermode agreed, saying, "All these crises in his life are reflected off Natasha in a way. If Natasha is very upset, that sort of stands for Stephen being upset, in a way. I don't think Stephen is very upset about the Leavitt book. And we had it all a couple of years ago with the Hugh David book. I think that must have happened many, many times in their lives. When things go wrong, she does the worrying, and Stephen goes on in his usual passive way."

According to Kermode, Natasha was also a central figure in another well-known Spender *crise*, when, in 1967, he discovered that *Encounter* had for many years been funded by the C.I.A. This news came as no great surprise to those who had noted the magazine's reluctance to discuss Vietnam—or, indeed, any of America's more dubious foreign-policy involvements. Spender had heard rumors, and asked questions, and had been lied to by his contacts at the Congress for Cultural Freedom. When the news broke, he was famously outraged. Or, at any rate, Natasha was outraged. By 1967, Spender was no longer editing *Encounter*. He had handed his job over to Frank Kermode two years earlier. But all the publicity centered on *his* wounds. "He was upset," Kermode says. "But he has a kind of calm that is made possible by the fact that Natasha takes the strain, I think."

David Plante's assessment is more subtle. "Stephen can be mischievous. One thing he loves doing, not only to Natasha but to others, as well, is to make them jealous. For example, I would be with him and Natasha and a few others, and Stephen would come up to me and say in a stage whisper, 'Are you free for lunch tomorrow?' which of course Natasha would hear. A sweat of embarrassment would come over me, and I'd go to Natasha and say, 'Oh, Stephen and I are having a secret lunch tomorrow,' and she'd laugh. So it was his fault for creating this mischief." Plante is full of admiration for Natasha and her various "accommodations," and he is not at all convinced that it is she who stirs things up. "He'll say, 'Oh, Natasha's very upset,' but I sometimes suspect that he's the one who's making her upset. But she is heroic in her intentions. I wish I could just give her a cup of warm milk and get her to go to sleep for ten or twenty hours."

It seems doubtful that Plante's wish will be granted. Natasha certainly sees herself as Stephen's round-the-clock protector. "I'm not by nature at all militant," she writes. "But I do sometimes see that Stephen's trustfulness will not avail him, and truth will not be served. He is incapable of dissembling or concealing, or even of keeping the secret of what he's going to give you for Christmas. Equally, it never occurs to him that others may be devious. This explains the *Encounter* row (though other, more perspicacious people, like Isaiah, were also taken in). Since it was simply not in



"It's nice, but I never smile like that. I smile like this."

Stephen's repertoire of expectations that colleagues of many years' standing could give solemn assurances that were systematically misleading."

About her role in crises such as the Leavitt matter, she wrote to me: "The record may never be put straight unless one takes steps. And also it's upsetting to see the toll of stress and the waste of energies in Stephen's declining years. He shouldn't have to be dealing with tiresomeness when he could be working at his own writing." And she told me earlier, "What I really think is that there are pressure groups in America now, and that in a way it's rather like McCarthyism. If you remember how we in Europe felt about McCarthyism—we thought America would never get out of it. Well, it *did* get out of it and there was extraordinary moral courage on the part of people who actually lived in America, which you didn't see through the newspapers. Well, now it seems to me a similar thing is going on. I mean witch-hunting by the gay-rights movement. Outing, they call it, I believe." Was she saying that Leavitt's book was part of that? "I don't know what Mr. Leavitt's position is at all. But we shouldn't really talk about it at all, because of the case."

"But Stephen *is* out," David Plante says. "Just by being himself. The gay-rights people see him in a limited way—simply in terms of his homosexuality. They say, 'He's married, he's lived with a woman for over fifty years.' So they are simplifying Stephen. All they see is the stereotype: a homosexual man married to a heterosexual woman. So they say Stephen is false to the marriage, false to homosexuals. But they haven't looked at the marriage closely. Make no mistake: the most important person in Stephen's life is Natasha. There is no question that they love one another. They had to love one another in order to be able to get through difficulties. And Natasha is right to object to the gay-rights sort of stereotype. She's also right to feel excluded. She's right to object to the view that she has stopped Stephen from expressing the fullness of his homosexuality, which is the kind of thing they might think. But these gays don't know the marriage—they don't know anything about it."

Does Spender himself object to being outed? I asked him how he felt about gay rights. "Well, when my novel 'The Temple' was published in America, a few years ago, my friend Brian told me that I had become a hero of the gay-rights movement," he said. "I was quite pleased—quite amused, really. I am very loyal to homosexuals. A lot of the best people I know are homosexual. Some of the very best relationships I've ever known are homosexual. They seem to me rather heroic relationships, some of them." Why did he think they were heroic? "Well, the way in which such people live out their lives quite fearlessly, openly, and so on. I think it does have a rather heroic aspect." He paused, thought for a moment, and then added, "Maybe that's because I am old-fashioned. I don't suppose nowadays it does require much heroism. But I dread the mutual bachelor household. And yet there are men who can live together and have a thoroughly domesticated life. They can make an art out of their life together. I don't think I could do that with a man. If I were sharing this house with a man, it would be an absolute shambles."

It is certainly not that, in spite of the crosscurrents. The Spenders have lived in the same rented house in St. John's Wood for nearly fifty years, and its interior captures the spirit of their marriage rather well. The drawing room is spruce and elegant, ready to take on the world. The poet's study is amiably cluttered, a retreat, and Spender wasted no time getting back to it as soon as his interviewee's chores were done. This ground-floor study is littered with the usual literary man's debris: review copies, old periodicals, press cuttings, galley proofs. An unexpected touch was the Spender word processor, which he seemingly knows how to use.

But then he still has to earn his living as a writer. His private income, he says, is now about ten thousand pounds a year, which "doesn't take one very far these days." I didn't ask about his fabled cellar, said to be piled high with minor works by the several distinguished artists he has known over the years. According to legend, there are Hockneys and Bacons down there, or perhaps a drawing by Cocteau, a statuette by Henry Moore. Nobody knows. My own hunch is that the cellar is stacked with back numbers of *Encounter*. But the Aladdin's-cave fantasy fits well with the image of Spender that his friends like to promote. On the one hand, he is so innocent and otherworldly that he seems to have no idea what his property is worth; on the other, he pretends to be a lot poorer than he apparently is. And when you ask which is the real Spender, the answer will be: both.

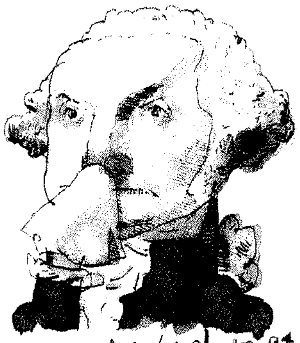
"He's in the clouds, but he has radar," the writer T. C. Worsley is reputed to have said, and Cyril Connolly once proposed that there are actually two Spenders: one is an "inspired simpleton, a great big silly goose, a holy Russian idiot, large, generous, gullible, ignorant, affectionate, idealistic—living for friendship and beauty"; the other is "shrewd and ambitious, aggressive and ruthless, a publicity-seeking intellectual full of administrative energy and rentier asperity." In a homelier way, Frank Kermode goes along with some of this: "If you're walking with Stephen in London, you always feel he doesn't know where he is, and yet he always seems to know the shortest way. The not knowing is the sort of thing Auden patronized him for. But Auden saw the appearance rather than the reality. Stephen wasn't quite sure what he was doing at any particular moment, but then he always was doing it."

I asked Natasha if Stephen really did know all the London shortcuts. She thought the idea was laughable. "Perhaps he just does it on automatic pilot."

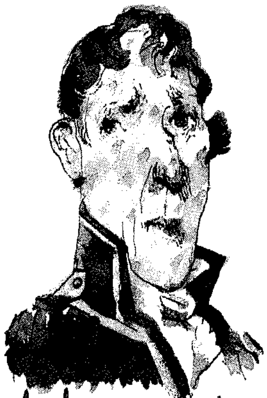
I left the Spenders to their war on David Leavitt, whose book has now been withdrawn by the publisher; a revised version will come out later this year. As I left, Spender reminded me of a "not very kind" review I wrote some years ago of his "Collected Poems 1928-1985" and two other Spender works—a review that provoked a loyal outcry from his friends. I had been hoping that he wouldn't bring this up and had readied myself for a reproach. But, no, he was wearing that mischievous half smile—his "Oxford smile," as I now think of it. "Usually," he said, "when critics say negative things about a work of mine, I cast the work aside. I can't bear to look at it again. I dismiss it from my mind. In your case, I was grateful." Grateful for what? "Well, you said very nice things in your review about those 1940 poems. No one had ever remarked on them before. I looked them up again quite recently, and you were right: they are quite beautiful." ♦

Presidential Allergies Through the Ages

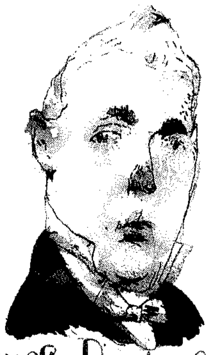
A HISTORY



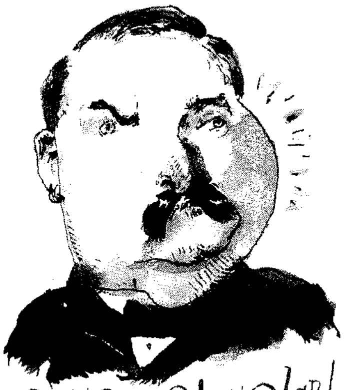
George Washington
ragweed, pollens,
dust, grass, trees



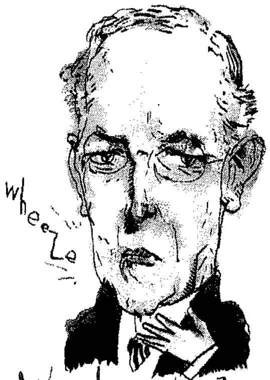
Andrew Jackson
mold, poultry



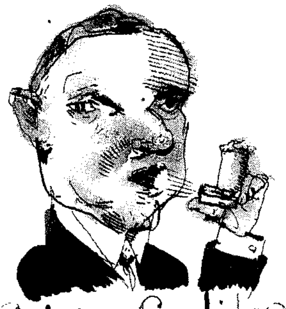
James Buchanan
dogs, cats, insect bites



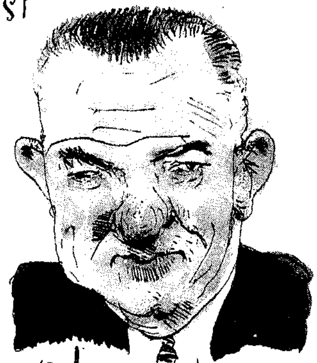
Grover Cleveland
animal hair, chocolate,
soap, wood, fish, dust



Woodrow Wilson
dairy products



Calvin Coolidge
egg yolks, milk,
house dust, tobacco,
chives, wheat, insect bites,
cosmetics



Lyndon Johnson
chocolate, wool,
penicillin, fish

Blitt

FICTION

UNDER THE ROSE

BY JULIA O'FAOLAIN

Dan said—to be sure, there was only his word for this; but who would invent such a thing?—that, in their teens, his brother and he had ravaged their sister on the parsonage kitchen table. Their father was a parson, and when the rape took place the household was at Evensong. Dan described a fume of dust motes sliced by thin, surgical light, a gleam of pinkish copper pans and, under his nose, the pith of the deal table. Outside the door, his sister's dog had howled. The truth was, said Dan, that she herself did not resist much. She'd been fifteen, and the unapologetic Dan was now twenty. It had, he claimed, been a liberation for all three.

"The Bible's full of it," he'd wind up. "Incest!"

The story was for married women only. Dan specialized in unhappy wives. *Mal mariées.* He sang a song about them in French, easing open the tight, alien vowels and letting the slur of his voice widen their scope: *ma-uhl mah-urrr-ee-yeh.* It was a Limerick voice, and those who resisted its charm said that the further Dan Lydon got from Limerick the broader his accent grew. The resistant tended to be men; women always liked Dan. To hear him lilt, "My lo-hove is lo-ike a r-red, r-red r-ro-rose" was, as respected matrons would tell you, like listening to grand opera. His vibrancy fired them. It kindled and dazzled like those beams you saw in paintings of the Holy Ghost, and his breath had a pulse to it, even when all he was ordering was the same again, please, and a packet of fags. Words, moving in his mouth like oysters, put town dwellers in mind of rural forebears and of the damp, reticent lure of the countryside.

The parsonage of Dan's youth lay in the grasslands watered by the River Shannon, flat country shadowed by those cloud formations known as mackerel backs and mare's tails—arrangements as chameleon as himself. He was a bright-haired, smiling boy, who first reached Dublin in 1943, a time when the Japanese minister rode with a local hunt and the German one did not always get the cold shoulder. Dan's allegiance was to the noble Soviets, but he was alive, too, to sexual raciness blown in like pollen from the war zones. Change fizzed; neutrality opened fields of choice, and values had rarely been shiftier.

"So where is your sister now?"

Mrs. Connors did and did not believe his story.

"Tea?" she offered. Tea was his hour. Husbands tended to be at work. Mr. Connors was a civil servant.

Dan took his tea. "She had to be married off," he admitted. "She has a sweet little boy."

Mrs. Connors dared: "Yours?"

"Or my brother's? I'd like there to be one I *knew* was mine." His eyes held hers. Putting down the cup, he turned her wrist over, slid back the sleeve, and traced the artery with a finger.

"The blue-veined child!" he murmured. "Don't you think children conceived in passion are special? Fruits of willfulness! Surely they become poets? Or Napoleons?"

Phyllis Connors was sure Napoleon's family had been legitimate. On her honeymoon, before the war, she had visited Corsica. "Their mother was addressed as Madame Mère."

"Was that the model Connors held up to you? 'Madame Mère'!" Dan teased. "On your honeymoon! What a clever cuss!"

The teasing could seem brotherly; but Dan's brotherliness was alarming. Indeed, Phyllis's offer to be a sister to him had touched off the nonsense—what else could it be?—about incest.

Nonsense or not, it unsettled her.

He was predatory. A known idler. Wolfed her sandwiches as though he had had no lunch—and maybe he hadn't? The parson had washed his hands of him. But Dan had a new spiritual father in a poet who had stopped the university from kicking him out. Dan's enthusiasm for poetry—he was, he said, writing it full-time—so captivated the poet that he had persuaded the provost to waive mundane requirements and insure that the boy's scholarship (paid by a fund for sons of needy parsons) be renewed. Surely, urged Dan's advocate, the alma mater of Burke and Sam Beckett could be flexible with men of stellar promise? Talents did not mature at the rate of seed potatoes, and Ireland's best-known export was fractious writers. Let's try to keep this one at home.

The poet, who ran a magazine, needed someone to do the legwork and when need be plug gaps with pieces entitled "Where the Red Flag Flies," "A Future for Cottage Industries?," or "Folk Memories of West Clare." Dan could knock these off at speed, and the connection gave him prestige with the fellow-undergraduates, at whose verse readings he starred.

It was at one of these that Phyllis Connors had first heard him recite. The verse had not been his. That, he explained, must stay sub rosa. Did she know that Jack Yeats, the painter, kept a rose on his easel when painting his mad, marvellous pictures of horse dealers, fiddlers, and fairs? Art in progress was safest under the rose.

After tea, Dan talked of procreation and of how men in tropical lands like Ecuador thought sex incomplete without it. That was the earth's wisdom speaking through them. R.C.s—look at their Madonnas—had the same instincts. Dan, the parson's son, defended the Pope, whose church had inherited the carnal wit of the ancients. "The sower went out to sow his seed. . . ."

Talk like this unnerved Phyllis, who was childless and unsure what was being offered. What farmer, asked Dan, would scatter with an empty hand? "Your women are your fields," he quoted, from the Koran. "Go freely into your fields!" Then he extolled the beauty of pregnant women—bloomy as June meadows—and recited a poem about changelings: "Come away, O human child. . . ."

Phyllis, thinking him a child himself, might have surrendered to the giddiest request. But Dan made none. Instead, he went home to his lodgings, leaving her to gorge her needs on the last of the sandwiches.

He came back, though, for her house was near the poet's, and after drudging with his galleys would drop by to cup hands, sculpt air, praise her hips, and eat healthy amounts of whatever was for tea. Refreshed, he liked to intone poems about forest gods and fairy folk. "And if any gaze on our rushing band," he chanted, "We come between him and the deed of his hand, We come between him and the hope of his heart."

Why did he not come after what he implied was the hope of his own heart? Wondering made her think of him more than she might otherwise have done, and so did seeing him in the Singing Kettle, eating doughnuts with the poet's wife. Peering through trickles in a steamy window, she thought she saw the word "love" on his lips. Or was it "dove"? His motto, "Let the doves settle!" meant "Take things as they come."

Phyllis decided that some doves needed to be snared.

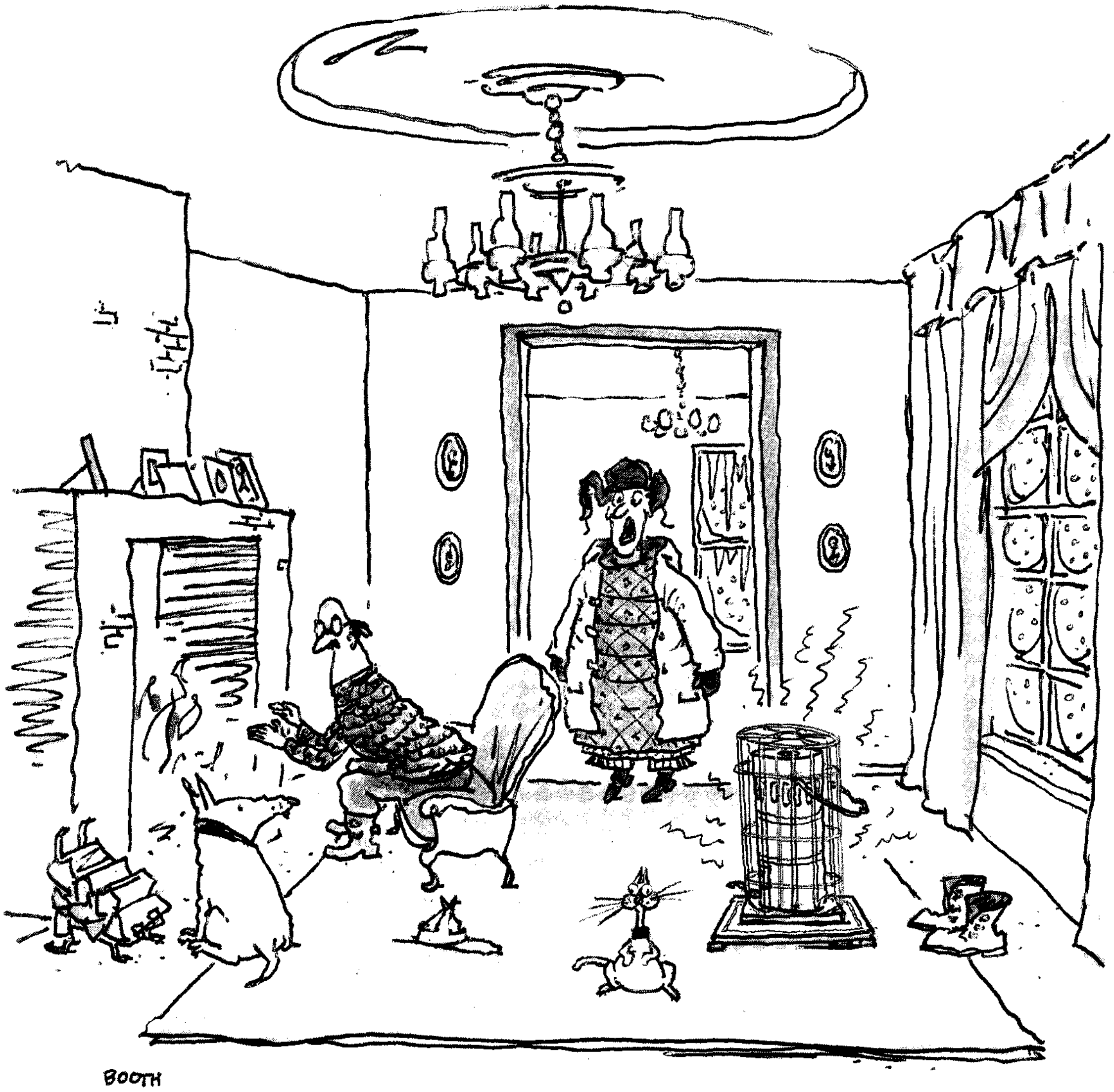
SOON she was pregnant, and when she went into the Hatch Street Nursing Home to give birth Dan brought her a reproduction of Piero della Francesca's Madonna del Parto, with the pale slash where the Virgin, easing her gown off her round belly, shows underlinen more intimate than skin. His finger on Phyllis's stomach sketched an identical white curve. He teased the nurses, relished the fertility all about, and was happy as a mouse in cheese.

It turned out that the poet's wife was here, too, and for the same reason. Her room was on another floor, so Dan yo-yoed up and down. Sometimes he brought gifts that had to be divided: fruit, for instance, from the poet, who still used Dan to run errands. Or books, review copies from the magazine. When a nurse let drop that the poet's wife had the same Piero Madonna on her side table, Phyllis wrapped hers in a nappy and put it in the trash. If there had been a fireplace, she would have burned it, as she had been trained to do with unwanted religious objects.

Her baby received her husband's first name, and the poet's baby the poet's. Dan—though neither couple asked him to be godfather—presented both infants with christening mugs. One had been his and the other his brother's, and both were made of antique Dublin silver. Early Georgian. The official godfathers, fearing odious comparisons, returned their purchases to Weirs Jewellers and bought cutlery. Phyllis wondered if Dan's brother knew what had happened to his mug. Though the war was now over, he was still overseas with the British Army.

"He'll not be back," Dan assured her, and revealed that the parsonage had been a dour and penurious place. Its congregation had dwindled since the R.C. natives took over the country in '21, and attendance some Sundays amounted to less than six. Pride had throttled Dan's widowed father, who did menial work behind the scenes and made his children collect firewood, polish silver, and dine on boiled offal.

"He wouldn't want the mug," said Dan. "Too many bad memories!" The



"They're burning pianos in Hartford!"

brothers had left as soon as they could, and getting their sister pregnant had been a parting gift. "If we hadn't, she'd still be Daddy's slave."

WORLD'S END

Sometimes it's more time than we care to be,
with the others. Sometimes it's interesting.
I can only tell you how to stop things happening.

Life is legendary. We're very bullish
on life. Dogs and other lives
convince us life is dog-cheap.

The future is a ghost. The past,
it says here, is an automated mannikin.
Not death, one of his plenipotentiaries.

Sea in my regards,
this life is lit
with all the sleep it can absorb.

I used to shuffle a lot. Someday
with luck I'll make it to the newsstand
and buy some cherries, greet old friends.

—JOHN ASHBERY

SOME years went by, and Dan was a student still, of a type known to Dubliners as "chronic," one of a ragged brigade who, recoiling from a jobless job market, harked back to the tribally condoned wandering scholars of long ago. This connection was often all that raised the chronics above tramps or paupers, and the lifeline was frail.

But out of the blue, opportunity came Dan's way. The poet, who had to go into the hospital, asked him to bring out an issue of the magazine bearing on its masthead the words "Guest Editor: Daniel Lydon." Here was challenge! Dan toyed excitedly with the notion of publishing his secret poetry, which he yearned, yet feared, to display. These urges warred in him until, having read and reread it, he saw that it had gone dead, leaking virtue like batteries kept too long in a drawer. Stewing, he fell behind with the magazine and had to ghostwrite several pieces to pad the thing out. As part of this process, he decided to publish photographs of A Changing Ireland. Hydrofoils, reapers-and-binders, ballpoint pens, and other such innovations were shown next to Neolithic barrows. The Knights of Columbanus in full fig appeared cheek by jowl with an electric band. Portraits of "the last Gaelic storyteller" and some "future Irishmen" rounded out the theme. The future Irishmen, three small boys with their heads arranged like the leaves of a shamrock, were recognizably Dan's nephew and the recipients of his christening mugs—and what leaped to the eye was their resemblance to himself. The caption "Changelings" drove the scandal home.

The poet, convalescing in his hospital bed after an operation for a gentleman's complaint, told his wife, in an insufficiently discreet hiss, that he had paid Dan to do his legwork, not to get his leg over. Reference was made to "cuckoo's eggs," and it was not long before echoes of this reached the ear of Mr. Connors, the proverbial quiet man whom it is dangerous to arouse. Connors, who had done a bit of hacking in his bachelor days, had a riding crop. Taking this to the student lodgings where Dan lived, he used it to tap smartly on the door.

When Dan opened this, Connors raised the crop. Dan yelled, and his neighbor, a fellow-Communist, who was on the varsity boxing team, came hurtling to the rescue. Assuming the row to be political and Connors a member of the Blue Shirts only reinforced his zeal. Shoving ensued; Connors fell downstairs; gawkers gathered, and the upshot was that an ambulance was called and the opinion bandied that the victim had broken his back. Some genuine Blue Shirts were meanwhile rustled up, men whose finest hours had been fighting for Franco, singing hymns to Cristo Re, and beating the sin out of Reds; they were spoiling for a scrap, and if it had not been for Dan's friend spiriting him out the back they might have sent him to join Mr. Connors—who, as it would turn out, had not been injured, after all, and was fit as a fiddle in a couple of weeks.

Dan, however, had by then prudently boarded the ferry to Holyhead, taking with him, like a subsidiary passport, the issue of the magazine bearing his name as "guest editor." It got him work with the BBC, which, in those days of live programming, needed men with a gift of the gab and was friendly to Celts. Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas were role models, liquid stimulants in high favor, and Dan was recruited straight off the boat.

SO ran reports reaching Dublin. Pithy myths, these acquired an envious tinge as Dan's success was magnified, along with the sums he was earning for doing what he had formerly done for free: talking, singing, and gargling verse. Others were soon dreaming of jobs in a London whose airwaves vapored with gold. Hadn't Dubliners a known talent for transubstantiating eloquence into currency? And couldn't every one of us talk at least as well as Dan Lydon?

Declan Connors doubted it. Despite himself, he'd caught snatches of what nobody had the indecency to quote quite to his face: a saga featuring Dan as dispenser of sweet anointings to women. These, Connors understood, had needed preparation. Persuasion had been required, and Dan's boldness at it had grown legendary, as an athlete's prowess does with fans. The gossips relished Dan's gall, the airy way he could woo without promise or commitment—arguing, say, that in a war's wake more kids were needed and that his companion's quickened pulse was nature urging her to increase the supply. Nature! What a let out! Any man who could sell a line like that in Holy Ireland could sell heaters in hell.

"He's a one-man social service!" A wag raised his pint. "Offers himself up. 'Partake ye of my body.' He'd rather be consumed than consume!"

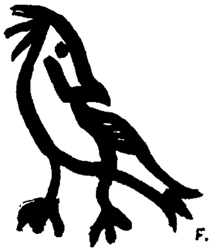
The wag drained his glass. His preferences ran the other way. So did those of the man next to him, whose tongue wrestled pinkly with ham frilling from a sandwich. All around, males guzzled: women, in this prosperous pub, were outnumbered ten to one. Connors, sipping his whiskey, thought, No wonder Lydon made out—we left him an open field!

He could no longer regret this, for after ten barren years of marriage, Phyllis had had three children in quick succession. It was as if something in her had been unlocked. He supposed there were jokes about this, too, but he didn't care. His master passion had turned out to be paternal, and Declan Junior was the apple of his eye. The younger two were girls and, as Phyllis spoiled them, he had to make things up to the boy.

For a while after the scandal, the couple had felt shy with each other, but they had no thoughts of divorce. You couldn't in Ireland, and it wasn't what they wanted. They were fond of each other—and, besides, there was Declan, of whom it was said behind Mr. Connors' shrugging back that he used his blood father's charm to wind his nominal father around his little finger. A seducer ab ovo.

Small-mindedness! Envy! Anyway, time heals, and when the boy was picked, surprisingly early, for his elementary-school soccer team, and later won ribbons for show jumping, Connors—a sportsman—knew him for his spiritual son. Even if the kid was a Lydon, he was a better one than Dan—whose brother, Connors recalled, had been decorated for gallantry in the war. Skimming the entry on Mendel in the encyclopedia, he learned that hereditary character was transmitted chancily and, remembering the poltroonish Dan draped over armchairs and cowering during their fight, decided that Declan Junior had nothing of his natural father's but his looks.

Connors still took an interest, though, in the news trickling back from London, where Dan's free lance was said to be cutting a swath: he had apparently acquired a new patron, a literary pundit who, though married, was partial to a handsome young man. And now Connors noted an odd thing: admiration was ousting envy and Dan's stature in the saga growing. Needless to say, his news was slow to reach Connors, since nobody who remembered their connection would wish to reopen old wounds. It came in scraps and, by the time he got them, these were as spare and smooth as broken glass licked by recurring tides.



As Connors heard it, then: Dan's new benefactor's marriage, though possibly unconsummated, was harmonious, for his wife had money. The couple made fashionable hosts, and Dan was soon glowing in their orbit—singing ballads, referring to his secret œuvre, and enlivening their soirées with tales of Irish mores. The pundit's wife, the story went, was a handsome, angry woman who had hated her father, but having agreed to inherit his money, would make no further concession to men, and slept only with those she could pity or control. As her husband didn't fit the bill, she had lovers. Dan was soon servicing both her and the husband who, being jealous and smitten, was in the dark about this.

Here the story fractures. In one version, she "gets preggers," which so shatters the husband that his violence leads to a miscarriage and Dan's subsequent flight to Paris. But there was an implausible symmetry to this, as though running dye from the Dublin episode had colored it; a likelier account has no pregnancy and the jealousy provoked by someone's indiscretion. Deliberate? Careless? Either way, Connors learned, Dan left England, the marriage collapsed, and the husband, previously a rather nerveless knight of the pen—who had, in his own words, "failed to grapple with his subjectivity"—finally did so in a book that raised him several rungs on the literary ladder. This was before the Wolfenden Report; homosexuality was a still painful subject, and his grappling was judged brave. Dan, as midwife to his lover's best writing, could be said to have done him a good turn.

Meanwhile, Declan Junior was in his teens, and his mother—noting that if you cut the heart from his name you'd be left with "Dan"—feared leaving him alone with his sisters. An idle fear: girls bored him, and so did poetry, to her relief. Not that Dan himself had yet published a line, but the appellation *Poète irlandais* clung to him, who had now—wonder of wonders!—married and settled in Paris. The word was that an old Spanish Civil War hero, whose memoirs Dan had been ghostwriting while sleeping with his daughter, had, on catching the pair in flagrante, sat on Dan's chest and said, "Marry her!" A bad day's work for the girl, tittered those Dubliners who still remembered him. One or two had looked him up on trips abroad and reported that he was doing something nowadays for films. Script-doctoring, was it? And his wife had published poems before their marriage, but none since. Maybe she didn't want to shame him? Closer friends said the marriage was a good one, and that no forcing had been needed.

Why should it have been? Marisol was bright, young, had a river of dark hair, and gave Dan the tribal connection he had always coveted. His ravenous charm sprang from his childhood in that bleak parsonage. Marginal. Clanless. Left behind by the tide. Catholics—whose clan had dispersed his—did not appeal, but the Left did. The Spanish Civil War had been Dan's boyhood war, and the more romantic for having been lost. Dan loved a negative. What, he would argue, was there to say about success? The surprise was that the Anglo-Saxon ruling classes could still talk and didn't just beat their smug chests like chimps. If it weren't for their homosexuals, he claimed, they'd have no art. Art was for those whose reality needed suborning. It burrowed and queried; it . . . et cetera! Dan could still chatter like a covey of starlings, and the Limerick accent went down a treat in French, being, as people would soon start to say, *médiatique*.

ALONG came the sixties. The Youth Cult blossomed just as Dan—in his forties—began losing his hair. Juvenescence glowed in him, though, as in a golden autumn tree. His freshness was a triumph of essence over accident, and he became an acknowledged Youth

Expert when he made a film about the graffiti of May '68. Graffiti, being, like pub talk, insolent, jubilant, and an end in itself, was right up his street, and he was soon in Hollywood working on a second film. It came to nothing, which confirmed the purity of his response to the ephemeral, and he continued to fly between Paris and California, dressed in light, summery suits and engaged in optimistic projects, some of which did throw his name onto a screen for a fleeting shimmer.

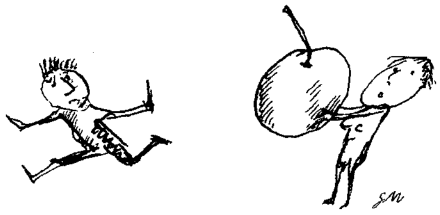
One evening in Paris, he came face to face with Connors and Phyllis in a *brasserie.* They were at different tables, and could have ignored each other. As their last encounter had led to Connors' departure from the scene in an ambulance and Dan's from Ireland, this might have seemed wise. Sportingly, however, Dan came over. Shiny and aglow, his forehead—higher than it used to be—damp with sweat. It was a hot night. Hand outstretched. A little self-deprecating. He had heard their news, as they had his, and congratulated Connors on a recent promotion. Family all well? Grand! Great! He was with *his.* Nodding at a tableful of Spaniards. Laughing at their noise. Then, ruefully, as two of his wrestling children knocked over a sauceboat, he said he'd better go and cope.

Soon the waiter brought two glasses of very old cognac with Dan's compliments. They accepted, toasted him, and, watching his gypsy table, remembered hearing that "the poor bastard" had saddled himself with a family of idlers whom he had to work overtime to support. Dan's father-in-law, it seemed, had emphysema. Marisol's brother yearned to be a pop star, and she herself kept producing children. How many had they? Phyllis counted three, who were dark like their mother and did not look at all like Declan Junior. As she and Connors left, they thanked Dan for the cognac.

Afterward, they discussed the encounter half sharply, half shyly. Looking out for each other's dignity. Not mentioning Declan Junior, whom Phyllis, her husband guessed, thought of as having two fathers. Blame could thus be moved about or dissolved in the whirligig of her brain. And she could play peekaboo, too, with romance. He suspected this because—the evening had brought it home to him—he, too, had an imaginative connection with Dan and had not liked what he saw in the *brasserie.* It had depressed him. Spilled gravy and domesticity cut Dan down to size, and a life-size Dan was a reproach, while the saga figure hadn't been at all. The connection to *that* Dan had, somehow, aureoled Connors' life and added a dimension to his fantasies. For a while, it had even made Phyllis more attractive to him. An adulterous wife was exciting—and he had often wondered whether it could have been that extra zest that had led to his begetting the two girls.

Water under the bridge, to be sure! The Dan Saga had not stimulated his sex life for years. What it did do was make him feel more benign than might have been expected of the sober civil servant he was. Broader, and even passionate. It was as if he himself had had a part in Dan's adventurings. That, of course, made no sense, or rather, the sense it made was private and—why not?—poetic. Dan, the unproductive poet, had, like Oscar Wilde, put his genius into his life: a fevering contagion. Or so Connors must have been feeling, unknown to himself. How else to explain the gloom provoked by the sighting in the *brasserie*? Phyllis didn't seem to feel it. But then, women saw what they wanted to see. Connors guessed that for her Dan Lydon was still a figure of romance.

It was around this time that Declan Junior began to disappoint his parents. A gifted athlete who handled his academic work with ease, he had come through university with flying colors and Connors, convinced that the boy could star in any firmament, had looked forward to seeing him join the diplomatic corps or go in for politics or journalism. Something with scope. Instead, what should their affable, graceful Declan do on graduating but take a humdrum job in a bank and announce that he was getting married! Yes. Now. There was no talking him out of it, and it was not a shotgun wedding, either.



Indeed, Declan Junior was rather stuffy when asked about this. And when you met the girl you saw that it was unlikely. She was limp-haired, steady, and—well, dull. Here was their cuckoo, thought Connors, turning out too tame rather than too wild. If there was a Lydon gene at work, the resemblance was more to the family man he and Phyllis had glimpsed in Paris than to the satyr whose heredity they had feared. Had they worked too hard at stamping out the demon spark?

That, they learned, was still riskily smoldering in the vicinity of Lydon himself. Connors heard the latest bulletin by a fluke, for he had grown reclusive since Declan's wedding and more so after the christening, which came an impeccable ten months later. He was, to tell the truth, a touch down in the mouth. Brooding. Had Phyllis, he wondered, been cold with the boy when he was small? Could guilt have made her be? And might there be something, after all, to Freudian guff? Till now Connors had dismissed it, but there was Declan, married to a surrogate Mum. *Born* to be a Mum: she was pregnant again, and had tied her limp hair in a bun. Cartoonish, in orthopedic shoes, she wore a frilly apron and loved to make pastry. Declan was putting on weight! Ah, well.

The latest about Lydon was that, hungry for money, he had agreed to be a beard.

A what?

"You may well ask," said Connors' source, a man called Breen, who swore him to secrecy. Breen was on leave from the Irish Embassy in Rome, which, said he, was in a turmoil over the thing.

"But what *is* a . . . ?"

Breen looked over his shoulder; they'd met in the St. Stephen's Green Club. "I can't tell you here."

So Connors brought him home and settled him down with a whiskey, to tell his story before Phyllis came in. She was babysitting Declan III, known as Dickybird, who was at the crawling stage and tiring. His mother needed a rest.

Breen's hot spurts of shock revived Connors' spirits. The Dan Saga thrilled him in an odd, outraged way, much as the whiskey was warming and biting at his mouth. Recklessness, he thought welcomingly, a touch of folly to temper the norms and rules.

Lydon, said Breen, had been acting as cover for one of the candidates in the upcoming United States election, a married man who was having it off with an actress. Needing to seem above reproach—"You know American voters!"—the candidate had engaged Dan to pretend to be the woman's lover.

"He was what's called a beard—travelled with her, took her to parties, et cetera, then left the scene when the candidate had a free moment." The beard's function was to draw suspicion. For the real lover to seem innocent, the beard must suggest the rut. And Dan did. Though he was now fifty, an aura of youth and potency clung to him.

"It's all in the mind!" said Breen, shrugging.

Outside the window, someone had turned on a revolving lawn sprinkler and the family Labrador, a puppy called Muff, was leaping at its spray. That meant that Phyllis and the child were back from their walk.

Breen said that what Lydon's wife thought of his job nobody knew. The money must have been good. Or maybe she hadn't known—until she was kidnapped. Kidnapped? Yes. Hadn't he said? By mistake. At the Venice Film Festival. By Sardinian kidnappers who got wind of the story but took the wrong woman. "The candidate's rich, and they'd hoped for a big ransom." This had happened just three weeks ago.

Connors was stunned. A changeling, he thought, and felt a breath of shame. Play had turned dangerous, and he had been relishing Lydon's tomfoolery.

"The Yanks came to us," Breen told him, "asking us to handle the thing with discretion—after they'd got the actress back to the U.S. You could say we're *their* beard!" He grew grave, for there was a danger that the kidnappers could panic. "Sardinians are primeval and inbred, you know! Islanders! What? No, no, not like us. More basic! Crude! Their life way was easy to commercialize because it *was* so crude. With them, vengeance required blood as real as you'd put in blood sausage. Quantifiable! Material! We, by contrast, are casuists and symbol jugglers. Closers of eyes . . ."

A flick of embarrassment in Breen's own eye signalled a sudden recognition that this could seem to refer to the story—had he only now remembered it?—of Connors and Dan: a case of eyes closed to lost honor. With professional blandness, he tried to cover his gaffe with an account of the Embassy's dilemma: on the one hand, the papers must not learn of the thing. On the other, the kidnappers must be made to see that there was no money to be had. Breen castigated Lydon, whose sins were catching up with him. His poor wife, though . . .

Connors tried to remember her face in the Paris *brasserie*, but could not.

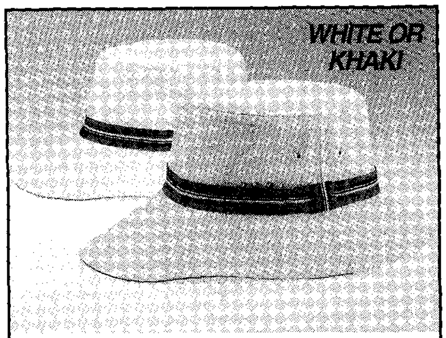
"That louser Lydon!" Breen, intending perhaps to express solidarity with Connors, threw out words like "parasite" and "sociopath." When you thought about it, a man like that was worse than the kidnappers. "He breaks down the barriers between us and them. He lets in anarchy. He sells the pass."

Connors tried to demur, but Breen, warming to his theme, blamed society's tolerance, for which it—"we"—must now pay. "Bastards like that trade on it." Someone, he implied, should have dealt with Lydon long ago.

Connors ignored the reproach. Off on a different tack, his mind was cutting through a tangle of shy, willed confusions. He recognized that what he felt for Dan was love or something closer. Far from being his enemy, Dan was a part of himself. Luminous alter ego? Partner in father- and grandfatherhood? Closing his ears to his companion's sermon, he looked out to where Phyllis and Dickybird had caught up with the golden Lab, on whose back the child kept trying to climb. Shaken off, he tried again: a rubbery *putto*, bouncing back like foam. The wild Lydon heritage had skipped a generation and here it was again.

Excited by the whirling spray, the puppy scampered through its prism while the infant held on to its tail. The child's hair was as blond as the dog's, and in the rainbow embrace the two gleamed like fountain statuary. They were Arcadian, anarchic, playful—and propelled by pooled energy.

"It's a terrible thing to happen," Connors conceded. "But I wouldn't blame Lydon. Blame the American candidate or the Italian state. Hypocrisy. Puritanism. Pretense. Lydon's innocent of all that. Blaming him is like, I don't know, blaming that dog out there." And he waved his glass of whiskey at the golden scene outside. ♦



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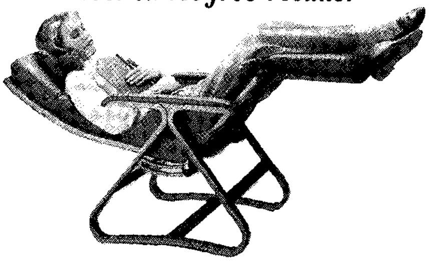

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How We Die
by Sherwin B. Nuland
(Knopf; $24)

Raising the Dead
by Richard Selzer
(Viking/Whittle; $17.50)

If you read widely on the subject of death—in the literature of grief and consolation, for instance—you realize that the subject isn't death at all; it's survival. The death of the inner mind with which you watch yourself is almost unimaginable, if only because it's so hard to conceive of the end of conceiving. The only preparation you can make for dying is a fiction—a story you tell yourself about how it will be to die. But the stories we tell ourselves about dying usually belong to its last moments; virtually no one has the power to imagine, in health, the details of the illness that will lead to death. That's what Sherwin Nuland's new book is for. It is, in its way, a primer, a guide to the facts as you are likely to live them, the facts likely to kill you—and me. Richard Selzer has also written a new book about death, but it's a rhapsody, the kind of fiction only a virtuoso would make of his own demise.

KAREN CALDICOTT

Selzer and Nuland are both surgeons who teach or have taught at the Yale School of Medicine. Nuland is the author of "Doctors" and "The Origins of Anesthesia." Selzer has written several highly mannered volumes of essays about the medical arts. Death has inspired these men differently. Nuland tries to "present it in its biological and clinical reality, as seen by those who are witness to it and those who experience it." He writes as surgeon, clinician, friend, kin to the dying and the dead, but also as an external observer, constrained in his empathic understanding by the fact that he has never died. Selzer takes a more flamboyant tack. He goes straight to the source. In March, 1991, he contracted Legionnaire's disease, collapsed at home in the room he calls his "scriptorium," and spent the next twenty-three days in a coma, within earshot of death. On the *twenty-third* day, he died. And was reborn, inexplicably, ten minutes later. He writes, "After ten minutes of certified death, the man has . . . risen. Risen! Such a word does not belong in an intensive care unit." The reader, aghast, reads on, only to find, sixty-six pages later, that Selzer has fabricated his own death. The disease was real enough, and so was the coma, but dying was just one of what Selzer calls his "writerly stunts," invented to provide a "climax."

Where death is concerned, there is no modern affect—except, perhaps, to deprive dying of all affect, to trivialize it. For some, the ritual of dying still belongs to the period of the Protestant baroque. Its language is the language of Jeremy Taylor or Sir Thomas Browne; its music is Bach's; its exemplar is John Donne, who, after youthful, contumelious talk of the grave, wrapped himself in a winding sheet in order to settle his accounts with God. Selzer is the true legatee of the baroque. In his other writings—in "Mortal Lessons" or "Confessions of a Knife," for example—you can almost see him on the wards, making rounds to the echo of muffled music, accompanied by a train of sombre white-coated residents, with perhaps an Elizabethan fool among them toting a death's-head or wearing a capuchin monkey on his shoulder. Selzer's prose is impish, sacerdotal. Elsewhere, he has warned the reader against the necessary egotism of the surgeon (whom he calls "an explorer in the tropical forest of the body"). To that egotism Selzer joins the pomp often found among doctors who write.

A surgeon appears in the overture to "Raising the Dead," but, for a change, it isn't the author; on this occasion, Selzer has been confined to the intensive-care unit—reduced to what he calls "a preparation, something [the doctors] have made and whose every flicker and seepage can be measured precisely." The surgeon he writes of is Dominique-Jean Larrey. In 1811, in Paris, Larrey removed a tumor from the breast of Fanny Burney, the diarist and author of "Cecilia." It was only the third mastectomy for cancer on record, and it was performed, of course, without anesthesia. ("*Que je vous plains!*" Burney says she said as the surgeon made his incision.) Before the operation, Larrey—also a writer—and Burney became close friends. "This was to the great benefit of Fanny," Selzer writes, "but it may have cost Larrey, who was seduced by his charming and vivacious patient into stripping off the protective carapace that is necessary to any man whose work it is to lay open the bodies of his fellow human beings."

With both the surgeon and the patient, a "supremely self-conscious and melodramatic novelist," Selzer closely identifies—his own carapace sadly broken, his own melodrama newly written. The rest of "Raising the Dead" is a chronicle of his collapse and prolonged, demented recovery. Selzer calls it a meditation; its subject is not a body surrounded by "the extravaganza of death" in a modern hospital but a self wandering indiscriminately among its delusions, only one of which is called reality. Many people who have had near-death experiences report the sense of floating above their bodies, but for Selzer that ghostly presence is merely his authorial double come to haunt him again—in this case, to marvel at the way the patient, trapped in the purgatory of his imagination, raves of monasteries and Khartoum. "Oh, let me confess it!" he writes of himself in the I.C.U. "Sometimes he seems brave and beautiful to me, although I know that I am the only one who would think so. Look at him! A sprig of chicory blooming between paving stones, indomitable."

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you see that Selzer is a humanist in the narrowest sense of the word, a man for whom the divine is strictly a category of human experience, human thought. "Raising the Dead" is not the memoir of Lazarus, still brushing clay from his winding cloth and blinking in the light; it is the passion and resurrection of Richard Selzer, whose suffering is redemptive and commodious. "His veins, the lack of them, are her Calvary," he says of an aide who has come to draw blood. Selzer is no longer the surgeon looking at himself in the mirror of his scalpel blade, but only because he is now the patient; he is still unable to imagine the sympathetic power of someone else's regard. You think of what he has gone through, and you recall what he says of Fanny Burney: "One hastens to forgive her entirely for her self-indulgence." Where Selzer is concerned, some readers may hasten more slowly than others.

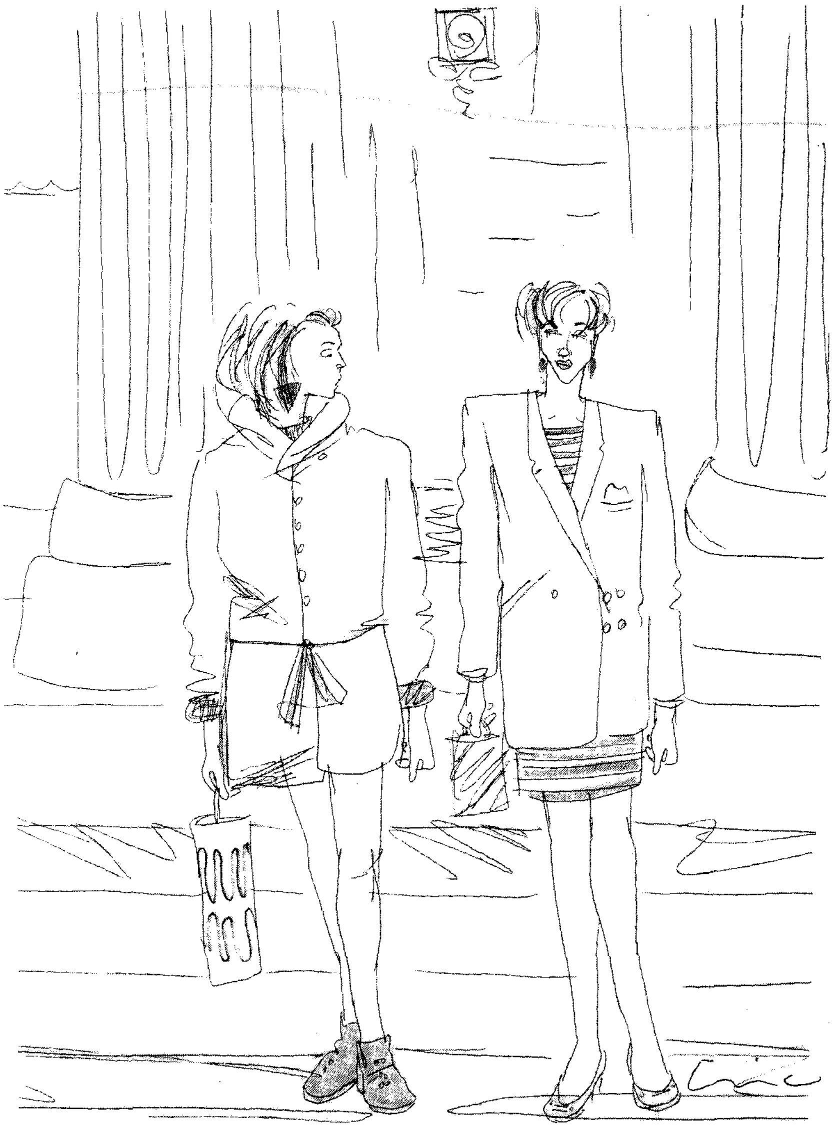
ONLY a few will return from the dead as Selzer fantasizes, and none for long. You often hear of medical cases where the slightest mishap—a fall, a concussion, a minor infection—is enough to hurry a living person offstage, and those cases suggest how insubstantial the wall between life and death really is. Yet, reading Nuland's book, "How We Die," you're likely to come to a different conclusion. Nuland reminds the reader how hard it is to kill a human being, how strongly the body resists its own demise. The hospital, the intensive-care unit—all of medical science—have become extensions of that resistance, expressions of the body's will to live. "Death is not a confrontation," Nuland says. He means that in dying there is no such entity as "Death" to confront. Dying is a confrontation between the will to live—the body's organic inertia—and the inexorable failure of the body over time. What makes "How We Die" so excruciating to read (and so instructive) is the details of that struggle.

Nuland portrays six of the most common deaths that modern Americans are likely to suffer: death by heart disease, trauma, cancer, AIDS, Alzheimer's disease, and old age. Of the last category he says, "These days (if I may steal a term from the jargon of the contemporary rialto), it is not politically correct to admit that some people die of old age." Medical specialists tend to insist that old people die of specific diseases, each of which can be treated individually. That is the inherent bias of the specialist: "The diagnosis of disease and the quest for overcoming it with his intellect are the challenges that motivate every specialist who is any good at what he does." Nuland demonstrates that the very old commonly suffer from several diseases at once. They die because they have been "worn and torn and programmed to cave in," he writes. "The very old do not succumb to disease—they implode their way into eternity." And he concludes that it's more dignified, as well as more rational, to accept the limits placed upon human life—to accept the necessity of death—than to cling to the vain belief that there will someday be a "scientific" end to aging. Nuland's argument is both ecological and cultural, and he cites Thomas Jefferson, who wrote, near the end of his own life, "There is a ripeness of time for death . . . when it is reasonable we should drop off, and make room for another growth. When we have lived our generation out, we should not wish to encroach on another."

But human beings rarely "drop off," like ripe fruit plucked by autumn. And only rarely are they able to prepare the deathbed scenes they imagine—those exercises, like Donne's, in *ars moriendi*. "The rest of us must make do with what we will be given," Nuland says. In some cases, dying is eased by modern medical science, but frequently it is worsened, and the act of dying is demeaned. Modern medicine offers the dying a tantalizing heroism, which often resembles the tortures Richard Selzer apparently suffered in the intensive-care unit, where he was "ventilated, dosed, defibrillated, probed, suctioned, and infused." Too often, that heroism serves doctors better than it serves patients or their families. In "How We Die" Nuland proposes what almost anyone who has been touched by death will recognize as common sense. "Better to know what dying is like," he writes. "We may thus be better prepared to recognize the stations at which it is appropriate to ask for relief, or perhaps to begin contemplating whether to end the journey altogether." Nuland cautiously concurs with something a

Harvard physicist dying of cancer said before he committed suicide: "I would like to take advantage of the situation in which I find myself to establish a general principle; namely, that when the ultimate end is as inevitable as it now appears to be, the individual has a right to ask his doctor to end it for him."

"How We Die" is intended to domesticate death. In the chapter on Alzheimer's disease Nuland writes, "There is probably no disability of our time in which the presence of support groups can help so decisively to ensure the emotional survival of the closest witnesses to disintegration." As the members of those support groups can attest, there's a difference between witnessing death—particularly as ravaging a death as the one caused by Alzheimer's—and witnessing the dead. We now know almost everything there is to know about the way corpses look when they're caught in the open, or dumped in trenches, or lined up on the cobbles of a public square, but almost nothing about the way the dead look when they come to rest at home, or lie decently shrouded, awaiting interment. We know still less what the stages leading to that final torpor are really like. The corpses so prominent on television and in newspapers and magazines are signs of social collapse; they are tokens of cultural affliction rather than reminders of our inevitable personal, organic decay. These bodies define what is different about the circumstances in which they died, instead of saluting those of us who, one way or another, are about to die.



"Our relationship has moved into the 'We are taking Italian' phase."

• •

"Every scientific or clinical advance carries with it a cultural implication, and often a symbolic one," Nuland writes in a chapter called "The Lessons Learned." Modern medicine has made living better, but it has made dying much worse. In "Raising the Dead" Selzer is too fascinated by the ingenuity of his survival to meditate on his peculiar position as a doctor comatose among intensive-care patients, some of whom had no doubt experienced what Nuland calls "abandonment by doctors." But one of the peculiar strengths of "How We Die" is that Nuland never shies away from the cultural implications of his profession, good or bad. There is a copious literature of doctors writing about doctoring—some of it scabrous, much of it sanctimonious in the extreme. In that literature you hear a lot of talk about what Selzer calls the "protective carapaces" of doctors, about the ways in which they distance themselves from their patients in order to serve their patients better. But it's never clear whether they're explaining a professional stance or an inadvertent effect. Nuland is more open. He admits that "I have written this book for myself as much as for everyone who reads it," and he reminds the reader that "medicine is the [profession] most likely to attract people with high personal anxieties about dying."

One by one, the people in "How We Die"—friends, patients, relatives of Nuland's—succumb to the common fate, their individual sufferings exemplifying the methods by which disease and trauma kill. Nuland spares no details, and he will not let you concentrate on the moment of release. "Serenity is usually bought at a fearful price," he says, "and the price is the process by which we reach that point." It's possible to read "Raising the Dead" without ever reflecting on your own mortality. Selzer's artfulness, the reflexiveness of his gaze, reminds you of the particularity of what he has suffered: he's unwilling to relinquish the individuality of his death. That, no doubt, is how we'll all feel when the time comes. But you cannot read far in "How We Die" without becoming aware of your body, if only to interrogate it, to ask it impermissible questions. You put the book down merely to pick it up again. ♦

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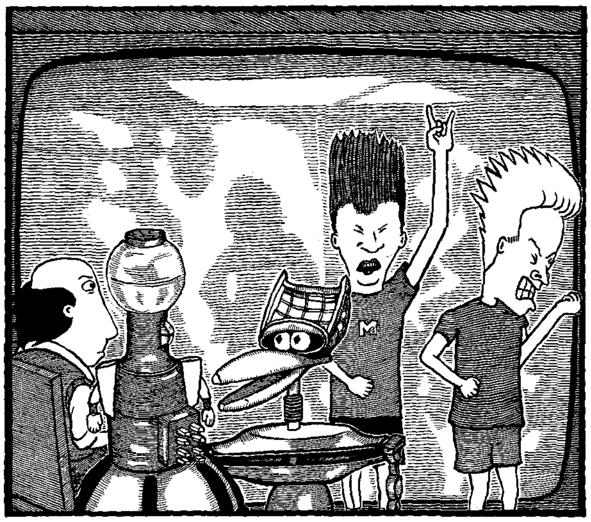
ON TELEVISION

EVERYONE'S A CRITIC

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

WATCHING certain programs is like having a TV inside your TV. They act as framing devices—a box within a box. They repackage the original show, placing ironic quotation marks around content that would otherwise be too sordid or tedious to watch. On the E! channel's "Talk Soup," a daily sample of excerpts from trash talk shows, the host Greg Kinnear's goofy good looks and absurdist comments apply a protective gloss to the raw material: the ugly exchanges on those shows, in which people call each other whores and molesters, are sealed like leftovers in Saran Wrap. Comedy Central's cult smash "Mystery Science Theater 3000" runs B movies for a captive spaceship audience of two robots and their human sidekick. The movies they're subjected to as part of a fiendish scientific experiment are so stilted and clichéd that the only way they can keep sane is to chat over them.



Calling the shots: Jay Sherman ("The Critic"), the robots from "Mystery Science Theater 3000," and Beavis and Butt-head.

Perhaps the daddy of this phenomenon is Mel Brooks' brilliant monologue in the animated short "The Critic," which won an Academy Award in 1964. Brooks plays a cranky old man with a thick immigrant accent who finds himself stuck watching a highbrow art film. "Oh, it's one of those," he mutters when he realizes what he's in for. (I'm quoting from memory.) As cartoon shapes created by Ernest Pintoff wobble and multiply on the screen, Brooks' old man tries to extract a story line from this lava-lamp display of blobs and squiggles. When other patrons try to shush him, he replies, "Don't shush me, I'm an old man, I'm going to die soon." Brooks' old man is an amateur curmudgeon, the chronic kvetcher as the lone voice of reason.

The hero of the new cartoon series "The Critic" (Wednesdays, ABC) is a professional curmudgeon—he gets paid to heckle the big screen, and he has the penthouse apartment to prove it. In a whiny voice provided by Jon Lovitz, "The Critic" 's Jay Sherman serves as the host of "Coming Attractions," a movie-review program on cable TV. The show-within-a-show format enables "The Critic" to run satirical clips of multiplex blockbusters like "Home Alone V" and "Rabbi, P.I.," in which Arnold Schwarzenegger goes undercover as a Hasid to root out evil ("Hava Nagila, baby"). A prig who prefers movies with subtitles, Sherman enjoys hurling spitballs at Hollywood product. It's the only time he feels "empowered." His personal life has been one long puddle. Like Homer Simpson ("The Simpsons" and "The Critic" share a producer—James L. Brooks), he's regarded as the Missing Link—half man, half doughnut. When his adoptive parents first spotted Sherman in his bassinet, they thought he was a monkey. His ex-wife uncorks a primal scream at the sight of him. Test audiences rate him lower than Hitler on the "warmth" meter. A starlet who sleeps with Sherman in order to land a favorable review, only to be panned, informs him, "You're short, you're fat, and, even for a film critic, you're ugly."

Despite his wacky Wasp parents, Jay Sherman is depicted as a classic Jewish schlemiel—a lovable loser under a permanent cloud. Although this is a minority opinion (the show has received high ratings and raves from reviewers), I think the creators of "The Critic" have erred by molding their protagonist into such a lump of dough. If Jay Sherman were a once idealistic critic now suffering a midlife crisis—a movie buff inspired by the cinema of Truffaut, Fellini, Bergman, and Val Lewton who finds himself having to manufacture quips about "Weekend at Bernie's II"—the show might have the friction of a fast mind spinning its wheels in frustration. Critics are often dismissed by detractors as leeches, bystanders, eunuchs in a harem. Hell, I've heard all those charges, and some of them hurt. But as the English journalist Julie Burchill recently observed, the true degradation in being a critic today is the inane, careless dreck one is forced to review. Jay Sherman doesn't convey an avid sensibility being force-fed formula. He's a bland mediocrity—a complacent burp. His trademark putdown of a movie is "It stinks." At the end of the première episode, he tells a movie usher, "Get away, zitface." Mel Brooks' old man had zippier responses—and they were improvised.

Every cartoon rewrites physics, which is why Wile E. Coyote can stand suspended in midair staring down a needle-drop cliff or Bugs Bunny can stretch his rabbit hole out as if it were rubber. The elasticity of time-space-and-matter allows animators to deploy energy in all vectors. "The Critic" doesn't make much of this opportunity for dynamic flux. It takes an occasional poke at the conventions of the cartoon form (a thought bubble whizzing around like a punctured balloon) or attempts a spoof of other animation, but otherwise it's staged as squarely as the worst Neil Simon comedy. The interiors are bourgeois blah, the faces drawn like the caricatures at Sardi's. A deadly pause follows each visual gag, so that even the good gags (Al Sharpton appearing in a video game) leave a pall. It's the middlebrow obviousness of the show, I believe, that has helped make it a success. It takes safe chances.

MTV's "Beavis and Butt-head," created by Mike Judge, represents another non-advance in the art of animation. If anything, it beats a ragged retreat. Their heads filling the screen like a pair of potato chips, Beavis and Butt-head share a bumpy sofa, stare at a non-stop circular of infomercials, game shows, and rock videos, and offer their own critical remarks. Vegetating without any parental supervision, they lead a lowest-common-denominator existence. They live in a generic suburb, attend a generic high school, and flip burgers at a generic fast-food outlet. They change their T-shirts about once every six months.

Because of their vast pockets of ignorance (advanced geometry is "triangles and stuff"), idiot pranks, and insipid wordplay, Beavis and Butt-head have been nominated by *Newsweek*, *The Nation*, and Joe Queenan in *Playboy* as the official pet rocks of the New Stupidity, a movement that includes Howard Stern and the "Wayne's World" movies. I think the dumb surface is deceptive. The show practices a shrewd primitivism. Now that the furor has died down over the series' animal-torture and firebug tendencies, it's clear that "Beavis and Butt-head" is a makeshift addictive classic, like *Mad* and "Louie, Louie"—a random virus that infects the entire pop culture.

Although "Beavis and Butt-head" satirizes psychobabble and political correctness, the show is mostly an airhead exercise in aimless activity. Like Laurel and Hardy, Beavis and Butt-head idle sideways through an endless sunny afternoon. The best episodes are those in which they set out for adventure, their Popsicle-stick legs leading them straight into disaster. A local hood squires them around in the trunk of his car; a tornado tears through a trailer park, interrupting their chance to score with some trailer chicks. In perhaps the prize episode, their attempt to buy a jockstrap has them trying on smaller and smaller sizes (Butt-head: "I'm no Don Johnson"), until they end up wearing eye patches as athletic supporters, only to be pictured on the front page of the school paper under the headline "THE THONG HAS ARRIVED!" Although the setbacks they suffer are at least as bad as those inflicted on Jay Sherman in "The Critic," there's no sticky trace of masochism in their exploits, because they have such a dead-

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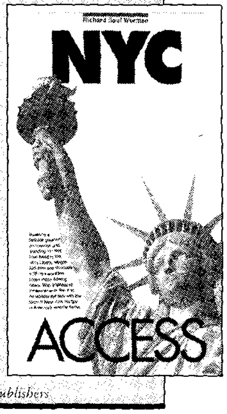

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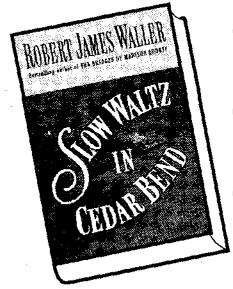
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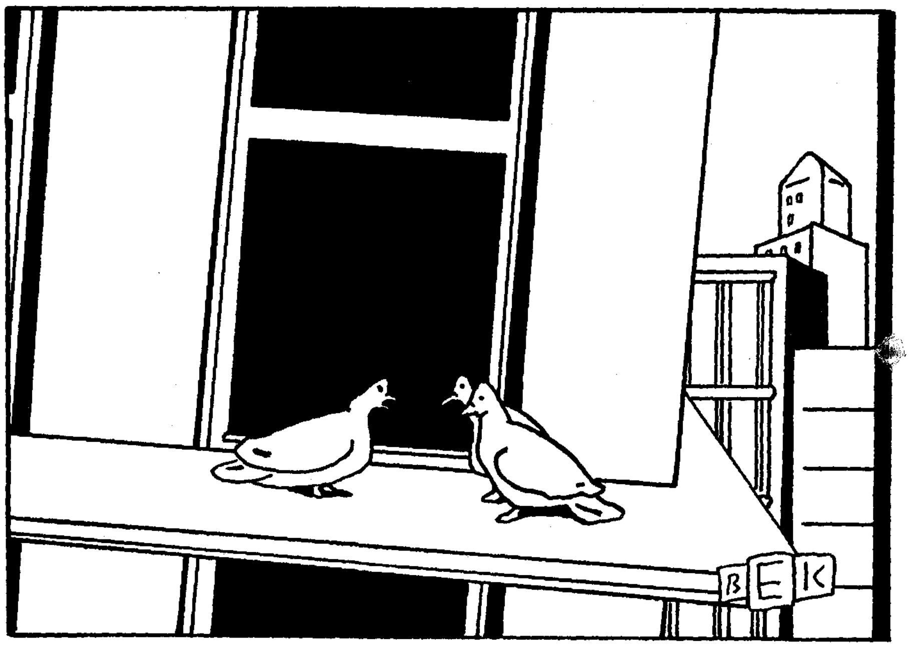

"Location, location, location."

• •

pan disregard for their own dignity. They rotate inside a dryer just to make themselves dizzy. They're at that age when any new sensation (fear, nausea, and even pain) is a trip, because it gives them something to talk about afterward.

Beavis and Butt-head have a binary system when it comes to evaluating experience. Either things are cool or they suck, though some things overlap. The conceptual coup of "Beavis and Butt-head" is the crosscut between the overproduced, hyperactive rock videos they watch—loaded with explosions, black leather, tattooed flesh, computer graphics—and the fishy reaction shots of the two, their casual sarcasm undercutting the lavish outlay of rock-star ego. Butt-head accuses George Michael of making eyes at Beavis. The band Kiss, who wear whiteface, are "pretty cool, for a bunch of mimes." Beavis and Butt-head compare a broody black-and-white video starring Chris Isaak to those ads by that perfume guy Alvin Klein. Like Mel Brooks' critic, they're baffled by abstract explorations. An especially atmospheric video by U2 moves Butt-head to ask, "Is this art?" (Beavis: "This means something.") When Yoko Ono pops onto the screen, Butt-head exclaims, "What the *hell* is *this* crap?" The more you watch Beavis and Butt-head, the more you're struck by how apt, beautifully timed, and effortlessly funny their backtalk is. It's true that reruns of the show have been in rotation for so long on MTV that these two characters are in danger of becoming historical figures, but their effect is so contagious that regular rock videos seem incomplete without the yellow "Beavis and Butt-head" sticker on the corner of the screen.

As television expands into more channels, more niche categories, there will be more mutations to monitor what's on those channels. TV will become a mall jammed with copycat boutiques. On E!, "Talk Soup" has already spawned "Pure Soap," a digest of daytime drama. It's probably only a matter of time before there's a program keeping tabs on the network newsmagazine shows, folding stories from "20/20," "Dateline," and "PrimeTime Live" into one handy video volume. Such meta-TV seems to cater to our condescension toward TV per se. We watch and withdraw at the same time, telling ourselves that this focal shift is deconstructive. I wonder how long viewers will be able to maintain their superior attitude watching used clips in new folders. If we're so superior to what we're watching, why aren't we doing something else? It's easy to fake being a critic when you're only looking down. It's looking up, or even looking straight ahead, that's hard. ♦

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THE CURRENT CINEMA

ANYTHING GOES

BY ANTHONY LANE

SET in Los Angeles, "I'll Do Anything" stars Nick Nolte as an actor called Matt Hobbs. The peak of Matt's success came when he was nominated for an Emmy in 1980 and lost out to Powers Boothe. *That* kind of success. Since then, he has dwindled into the Unemployable Hulk, ready to drop everything, including his dignity, for the sake of an audition. Meanwhile, his lonely ride through life is saddled with extra baggage when his ex-wife, Beth (Tracey Ullman), gets carted off to jail, leaving their six-year-old daughter, Jeannie (Whittni Wright), in his care. It takes him about twenty seconds to gather that Jeannie is a complete nightmare, and then two hours to metamorphose into her dream dad. I had a feeling that this was going to happen, and, to be honest, I don't think it was worth the bother. He should have dumped her while he had the chance; when she kicked up a fuss on the airplane to L.A., for instance, he could simply have taken her to the washroom and flushed her away at thirty thousand feet.

This may sound cruel, but go see the movie for yourself and you'll soon realize it's the only option. When I'm asked if any aspects of cinema have got better, as opposed to worse, over the last decade or so, I can usually name two: special effects and the standard of child acting. Well, it's down to one. The performance of Whittni Wright in this movie is like a voodoo incantation designed to raise the spectre of Shirley Temple from the darkest corner of movie hell. When she pressed "Play" on her rainbow-colored tape recorder, pinned Nick Nolte down, and made him pay attention while she sang and danced along to "You Are the Best," I experienced a sudden but unquenchable desire to leave the movie theatre and join a Cistercian order. Lord only knows what went through Nolte's mind. Maybe he just gritted his teeth and tried to remember his favorite things, like the fistfight he had with Eddie Murphy in "48 Hrs."

But, like it or not, the slow bloom of affection between father and daughter turns out to be the main growth area of this picture—a mistake, I think, because Matt's ordeal at the hands of Hollywood is far more intriguing. Called in one day by a studio, he reads for a part, closely watched by Burke Adler (Albert Brooks), a producer with problems of his own. Matt's idea of "reading," it becomes clear, is to undergo instant nervous collapse. Scarlet-faced, wiped out, wrestling with tears, he gives it his all, and gets it wrong. Burke explains that it's supposed to be a comedy. Matt is bewildered: "Comedy?" This unsettling se
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tale of "I'll Do Anything." It was planned and shot as a musical, but when it was tried on preview audiences everyone cracked up as soon as the characters opened their mouths and began to sing. (The irony here is ten feet thick, since the movie is partly *about* the preview system, and actually shows a test screening and its potent, fickle aftermath.) So the studio lopped off the offending material, presumably under anesthetic, and what we have left is a musical without music, and a comedy without enough jokes. Imagine "Duck Soup" with nobody but Zeppo, and you'll get the idea. The tantalizing questions, of course, still hang in the air: If Whittni Wright's ear-murdering rendition was the only tune good enough to make it into the final cut, what on earth were the others like? Did the audience laugh because the songs were lousy, or because they were delivered by Nick Nolte? And, in that case, did he sound like Howard Keel or like a lawnmower-repair shop? Maybe it goes deeper than that; the notion of a musical is itself a joke by now, requiring a balmy climate of innocence—sexual, political, bright with national credulity—that will never again be sustained inside a movie theatre, let alone outside. Hence the brittle, besieged quality that marks the later Doris Day pictures: all around her, people were starting to stretch their mouths to feast on one another's bodies, hile hers, defiantly, was one of the last en wide for song.

and again, you can spot the joins Anything," as the characters limber up for lyrical release and then stop dead. When Burke crows that "I don't make movies for theatres that serve cappuccino in the lobby," you want him to explode into a rousing, big-band homage to the world of Harry Cohn, but no joy. Out of the office, meanwhile, he maintains a spiky, on-off romance with Nan Mulhanney (Julie Kavner), which seems to obey a mad narrative logic all its own, and could have used a few yearning duets to keep it on track. Then, there's the wistful moment between Matt and Cathy (Joely Richardson), a radiant young movie executive whom he pursues, in his stumbling fashion, throughout the film. As they're saying goodbye one day, he blurts out, "So what are you, totally wonderful, or what?" If that isn't the cue for a big number, I don't know what is. Nolte is standing there in a chunky, heart-fit-to-bust, Gene Kelly kind of way, and all Richardson has to do is take a deep breath, hear the brass section snap in with a cheery Charleston beat, and reply, "*I'm* wonderful, *you're* wonderful, *let's* be wonderful, toooo. . ." But nothing happens; she gets into her lemon-yellow car and drives off.

On the other hand, that in itself represents a strong statement; "I'll Do Anything" is so steeped in the essence of Hollywood that cars provide the main arena for the staging of emotional conflicts. When Matt fails his audition, Burke gives him a job anyway, as a part-time amateur chauffeur; deciding whether to ride up front for the sake of friendship or in back for the sake of career pride is for Burke one of the major social quandaries of our time. This alien etiquette is pushed to the limit by the best scene in the movie, which comes out of nowhere. It begins when Matt and Cathy decide to go home and make love. That sounds fairly straightforward, and you expect to cut straight to the bedroom, but first they have to get there; so Brooks shows the two of them in separate cars, chatting with each other on the phone, setting off with sweet talk and then shifting gear into sour dispute—all on a lovely, unsmoggy afternoon, with the camera working hard to keep the two vehicles together in the frame as they swing round the curves in the road. It's the perfect image of a place where human relations have taken an unlikely turn—where the attempt at intimacy, however stylish, somehow encourages you to keep your distance. Where else could a movie chance upon such buoyant despair, if not at the heart of the movie world itself?

Nothing else comes close to that casual skill. The assault that Brooks launches on the ethics of Hollywood is, for the most part, pitched at a plaintive, shin-kicking level. There are jokes about real actors designed to make us giggle—hey, the inside dirt!—but a little of this goes a long way, and "The Player" has already gone there. Altman was far shrewder than Brooks, of course, although even he missed his footing from time to time and slipped into complacency; by comparison, "I'll Do Anything" is knee-deep in the stuff. At one point Nan pronounces that Los Angeles can be compared with Washington in "the near-total degradation of what were once grand motives—the same spiritual bloodletting." Now, hang on a moment. What, exactly, were these grand motives? Do you have an address for them? With its blend of hysteria and dud moral nostalgia, this is straight out of the Oral Roberts school of screenwriting, and the fact that it's spoken by Julie Kavner only makes it worse. What is a funny lady like her doing with a speech like that? James L. Brooks is back with the old weakness that plagued him throughout "Broadcast News": he's falling for the values that he affects to despise. Most viewers won't know where to turn, or, in the case of Whittni Wright, where to look. "I'll Do Anything" may not serve cappuccino in the lobby, but there isn't any popcorn, either. ♦

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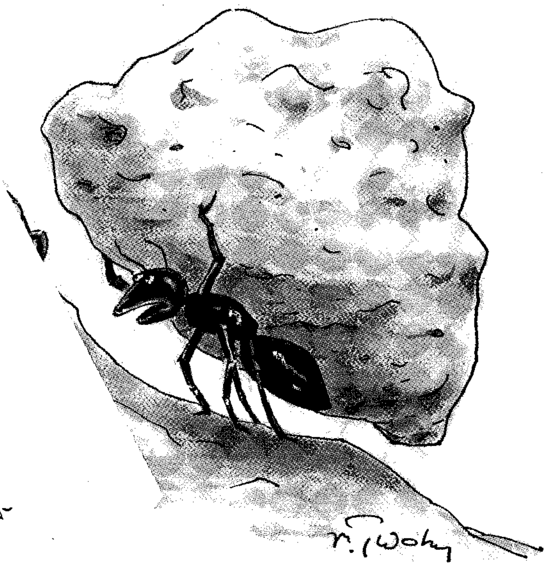
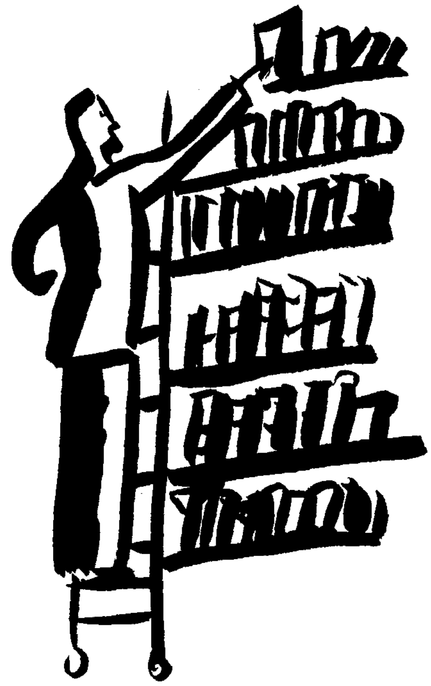


stops being fun."



BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Irrawaddy Tango
by Wendy Law-Yone
(Knopf; $23)

"IRRAWADDY TANGO" is the name of the dance number that wins a poor young woman in rural Southeast Asia a prize, a husband, and the nickname that sticks to her for the rest of her life. The husband becomes a general and then the supreme ruler of their small country, which is known as the Haiti of the East. He is, not surprisingly, a thug, whom Tango must serve as a sexual slave. She is rescued from him—though that is hardly the intention—by a rebel group in the hills. She and its leader fall in love, and after he is killed she becomes a rebel leader herself. Captured by her former husband's men, she is imprisoned and tortured, and rescued again, this time by an earnest American human-rights activist, who, of course, marries her, but turns out to be more obnoxious, in his quiet way, than his predecessors. In recounting this life of leaping from frying pan to fire and back, Tango's narration is as stylish, restrained, violent, and full of thrilling juxtapositions and reversals as that dance.

The Soloist
by Mark Salzman
(Random House; $19)

FORMER prodigy plays cello; thinks; stops playing cello; thinks some more; plays cello again. That's the plot. Most of the thinking happens because he winds up on the jury of a remarkably unsuspenseful murder trial: a fledgling Zen disciple, prompted by the koan that says to kill the Buddha, has beaten his master to death in front of many witnesses. Nevertheless, Salzman's new novel is almost a cliffhanger in its own perverse, cerebral way. It is also, disconcertingly and refreshingly, edifying. You may sometimes wonder who the author thought his readers might be: surely anyone capable of identifying with a nerdy, narcissistic, thirtysomething male virgin like Reinhart Sundheimer (the thinker with the Guarneri) will not need definitions of Zen or schizophrenia. But, because his story is told in the first person, such irritating condescension serves to illustrate his limitations; this humorless prig earns our sympathies as we recognize that his life has become a self-imposed prison sentence. By the time he has found enlightenment through a less literal interpretation of the lesson that caused the disciple to murder, any reader who has come that far with him may, despite the willfully undramatic evidence of his salvation, be moved to tears.

GENERAL

Liberty and Sexuality: The Right to Privacy and the Making of Roe v. Wade
by David J. Garrow
(Macmillan; $28)

IN this monumental, indispensable history, Garrow traces the source of Roe v. Wade to the 1965 Griswold v. Connecticut. In that case, the Supreme Court not only declared unconstitutional a Connecticut law that prohibited the use and prescription of contraceptives but enunciated a constitutional right to privacy. The first chapters of Garrow's book are devoted to chronicling the struggles of Connecticut reformers to persuade the legislature to repeal or modify the law—which, primarily because of the political clout of the Catholic Church, had been on the books since 1879. Its practical effect was that rich women and their physicians broke it, while women too poor to pay for medical care had no access to contraceptive information. Finally, in 1961, Estelle Griswold, the executive director of Connecticut Planned Parenthood, and Dr. C. Lee Buxton, of the Yale Medical School, opened a birth-control clinic for married women in New Haven. Both were arrested, tried, and convicted, and their appeal elicited the Supreme Court decision.

In the movement to legalize abortion that followed, the reformers were mostly women reacting to the high mortality in illegal abortions, the economic bias of state abortion laws, and the perhaps inescapable element of sexual discrimination. Garrow has drawn on the files of several justices, so we learn how the court worked its way to decisions in both Griswold and Roe, finding precedents for the right to privacy in decisions going back to the beginning of the twentieth century. At the same time, the gossipy details in these informal documents bring the judges to life as individuals. And Garrow fair-mindedly allows the opponents of Griswold and Roe to speak for themselves. We discover that none of the state attorneys charged with defending antiquated statutes could define the laws' original intent, while theoretical objectors—of whom Robert Bork may be the best known—argue that the right to privacy established by Griswold isn't rooted in the Constitution. The real issue, of course, as Garrow points out in a discussion of the Supreme Court's 1992 decision in Planned Parenthood v. Casey, has never been whether contraception and abortion are right or wrong but, rather, the limits of government intervention. ♦

FROM OUR PAGES

(All or part of these recently published books originally appeared in The New Yorker.)

Make Me Work
by Ralph Lombreglia
Farrar, Straus & Giroux ($20)

Minor Heresies, Major Departures: A China Mission Boyhood
by John Espey
California ($25)

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

A HOLLYWOOD LEXICON

BY DAVID FREEMAN

"I heard he was dealing Academy tapes."

"Peddling his black box?"

"That's not all. His kids have the ballot."

"The only way he'll get to the Oscars is as a seat-filler."

"Yeah. Well, you know what Hitch said."

SECOND-GUESSING the Oscar nominations and then complaining about the eventual winners is one of our national pastimes. The real fun is figuring out elaborate reasons, which can verge on conspiracy theory, for the voters' doing as they do. "Hopkins? Again? Never! He got the knighthood. They'll think that's enough."

"Of *course* Hopkins. *Because* of the knighthood. They eat that stuff up!"

"Too many Brits—Hopkins, Neeson, the 'Mohicans' guy—they'll cancel each other out. It's Hanks. They love disease. And he cried! Tears always win." The common assumption, seemingly held by all who handicap the Oscars, is that the Academy is composed of forty-five hundred elderly day players who long ago lost their marbles.

Academy tapes: In the last few years, the studios have sent videotapes of their movies to voters. Some are commercial tapes, but many are special versions of films still in theatrical release. These have subtitled warnings: "Academy viewing only, not for sale or rent." The warnings used to be discreet; they were repeated a few times and that was it. Now some studios include an 800 number you can call if somebody has tried to rent or sell a tape to you. ("All calls confidential.") And one studio includes a message to the effect that this cassette is for your private viewing pleasure and if you try to duplicate it or sell it they'll hunt you down like a dog. Not unexpectedly, this new interest in security has created a market for the tapes. I can't think that anyone would shell out a lot of money for a copy of, say, "The Joy Luck Club" when it will soon be available at market price. But a copy for Academy viewing only, with special warnings? Everybody wants one.

Black box: One normally penurious studio sent voters an elaborate wooden box fitted out with videotapes of nine of its releases. It looks like a large cigar humidor of the sort posh restaurants used to have, and it's too heavy for a lot of those elderly day players to lift.

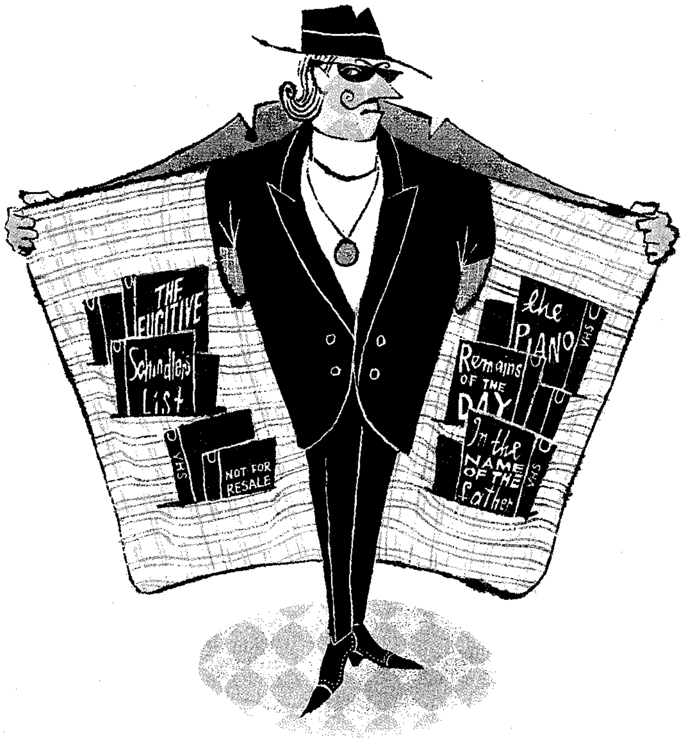
Kids and ballots: Members are instructed at length about being careful with their vote. No one is supposed to know how you voted, lest Nick the Greek get an edge. And the members do take voting seriously—most of them.

JUNIOR: Can I do your ballot this year?

DAD: No.

JUNIOR: Oh, please, please, please.

DAD: Oh, all right. But just Best Makeup.



EDWARD FOTHERINGHAM

Seat-filler: During the actual awards show, nominees have been known to leave their seats—to pace, to smoke, to schmooze. If the TV cameras were to spot the vacancy, though, it would look to the world like a permanently empty seat, which in show business means failure. So people who look good in evening clothes are engaged to sit down fast. Each time a grandee wanders off, a seat-filler jumps in. From the house, it looks like a well-dressed sporting event: attractive young people race for chairs, then surrender them when the rightful occupant reappears.

What Hitch said: Ingrid Bergman took her work seriously. On the set, she worried about the picture and she worried about her performance. She did some of her best work with Hitchcock, who also worried about such matters but rarely said so, and certainly not on the set. He tried to comfort her, and his counsel has found new applications. On Oscar Night, nominees in a cold sweat will be told to relax, because, after all, "it's only a movie, Ingrid." ♦

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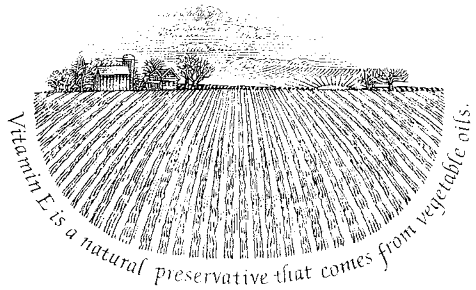
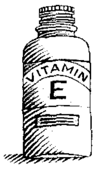

Vitamin E is a natural preservative that comes from vegetable oils.



—— Robert Urich

Or better yet, why not read it for him. That way, you can tell him yourself that the preservative added to Purina O.N.E.® Brand is one that Mother Nature created—Vitamin E. It's an excellent way to help maintain freshness naturally.

In addition, Purina O.N.E. combines real chicken or real lamb with rice, corn and other high-quality ingredients to provide optimal nutrition for your dog at every life stage. And he'll love the taste.

If you don't happen to be feeding your dog Purina O.N.E. with natural Vitamin E, it might make sense to buy him a bag first.

And read this to him later. For a free sample of Purina O.N.E., call 1-800-787-0078, ext 480.

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LAMB & RICE FORMULA
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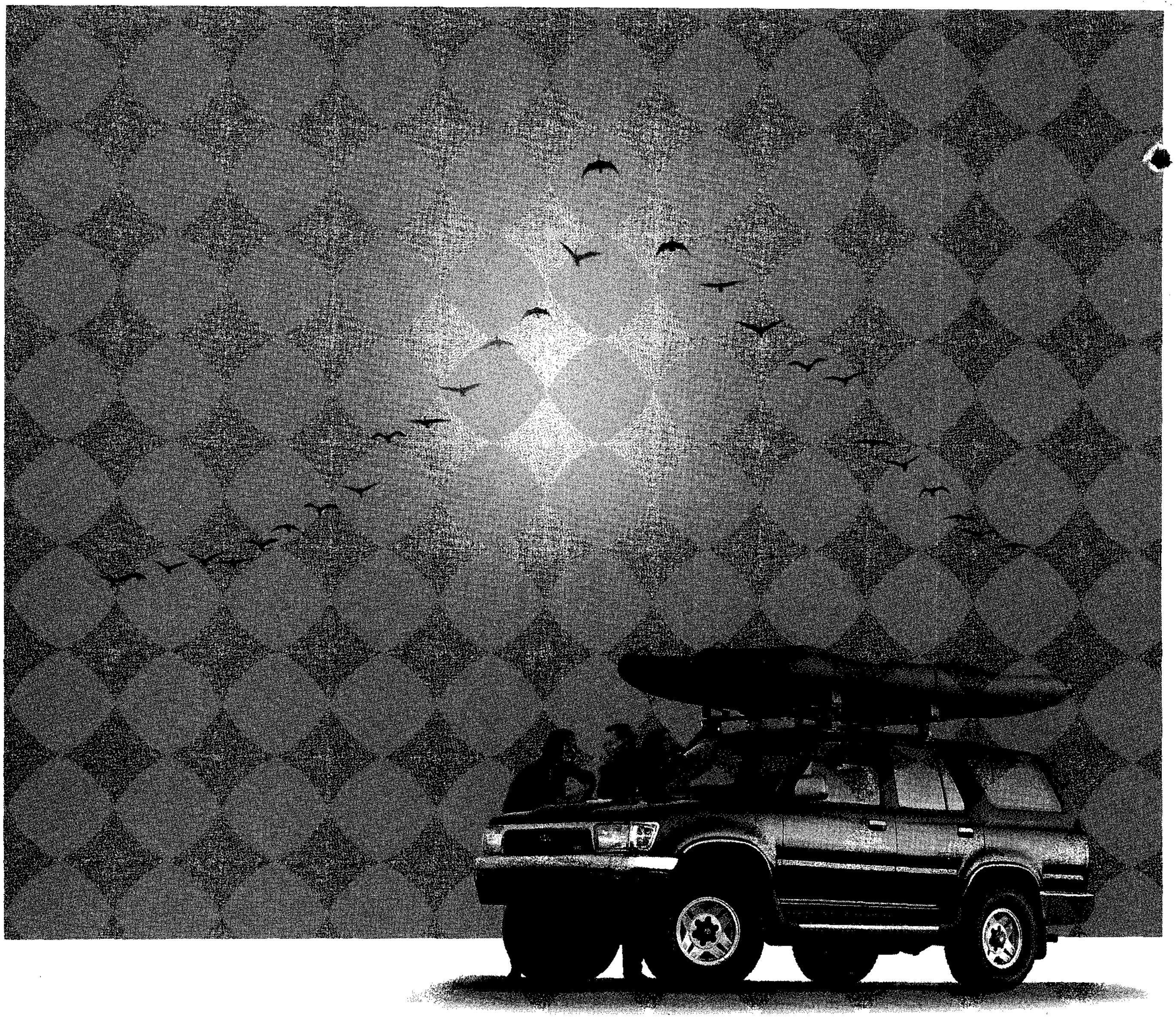
PURINA O·N·E® SECOND TO NONE™

No Matter How Far The Journey The Need To Make It Home Is Basic.



Why is it the farther away we travel the more we think about home? Is it the fear of not making it back? Or is it just our natural instinct.

Whatever the reason, here's some peace of mind: The Toyota 4Runner. With a reputation for reliability that's made the competition, well, a little bit envious.

Not to mention, the 4Runner has also been ranked by its owners as the Best Compact Sport Utility Vehicle in Initial Quality for three years running.*

Impressive? Yes. But not as impressive as what the rugged 4Runner carries on every journey. Like a 150-horsepower V6 engine. "Shift-on-the-move" 4WDemand. Rear Anti-lock Brakes.** Side-door impact beams. And a host of other creature comforts. Things some people call luxury, we just call basic. The 1994 Toyota 4Runner SR5 V6. For the way there. For the way back.

TOYOTA 4Runner

"I love what you do for me."

Call 1-800-GO-TOYOTA for a 4Runner brochure and the location of your nearest dealer. Toyota reminds you to *Tread Lightly!*™ on public and private land.
*J.D. Power and Associates 1991-1993 Initial Quality Studies℠ 1993 study based on a total of 11,719 consumer responses indicating owner-reported problems during the first 90 days of ownership. Includes compact sport utility vehicles. **Available 4-wheel ABS on SR5 V6 models. Buckle Up! Do it for those who love you. ©1993 Toyota Motor Sales, U.S.A., Inc.